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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1900.

## *One of Ourselves.<sup>1</sup>*

BY L. B. WALFORD,

AUTHOR OF 'MR. SMITH,' &C.

### CHAPTER XIII.

'May be,' said she,  
'He'll fancy me,  
And disappoint ye a'!'

IT was Mr. William Farrell's turn at the bank. Strictly speaking it ought to have been Thomas's turn, but these private matters were arranged between themselves, and: 'Seems to me you don't look quite the thing,' said William one day, eyeing his brother with friendly solicitude.

'Don't I?' responded bulky Thomas, always easily alarmed about his health. He suffered occasionally from over-feeding, when his pathetic helplessness would be a sight to see. He would listen to anybody's and everybody's opinion, and take a remedy from whomsoever offered it.

'A little bit run down, eh?' suggested William, further.

Now that he thought of it, Thomas owned that he did feel a little bit run down. It was the plaguy hot weather, no doubt. Hot weather always did upset him—and he put his hand to his forehead.

'A pity to feel like that at the beginning of the worst of it,' said William, gravely. 'What are you doing for yourself? Not that there is really much amiss, I dare say. I only fancied,' with a

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critical glance, 'that for some days past you have looked a trifle off colour, and of course with a man of your full-habit——'

'It's only the heat, man; only the heat,' hastily.

'Just what I was going to say. Heat tells. And you stout fellows feel it more than we of the lean kind. Well now, look here, I don't mind what the weather is—don't care twopence for it; suppose we change with each other for next month?' playing with a pencil as he spoke, and regarding the other cordially while making the proposition.

'Pon my word, that would be a good——but do you really mean it? You think I need it? No one else tells me I'm looking ill,' quoth Thomas, disturbed, and taking counsel with himself.

Certainly he had been troubled with disagreeable sensations of late; he had felt a heaviness, a languor, a distaste for exertion; what if it all meant impending ill-health? He rubbed his brow, and tried to consider the point dispassionately.

'Prevention is better than cure, you know,' said William, pleasantly. 'No, I don't think you absolutely *must* go, but you might *as well* go. I offer you the chance. The change would set you up; and, for my part, I would as soon stay as go.'

'It is uncommonly good of you to say so.'

'Not at all; I am as fit as a fiddle.'

'But I had three weeks in May, and you only took a few days at Easter.'

'Pho—pho! I could have taken more if I had wished. I'll take a spell in the autumn. Meantime, suppose I stay here for August and September, and you be off to Germany and try the waters?'

To be sure Thomas thought he would like to go to Germany and try the waters very much.

'Tell Priscilla, then,' said his brother, in a decisive tone; 'tell her it's all arranged, and settle to be off as soon as you like.'

'But what will *you* do, dear William?' cried Priscilla, when she was told, or rather when she saw her brother-in-law next. 'Of course it is delightful for us; and I quite agree with you that dear Thomas does need a change. I have thought so several times of late; but he is so difficult to persuade, and then I knew it really was his turn at the bank next month.'

'Between brothers, we needn't stick at that,' said he, smiling at her.

'So dear and kind of you; and indeed we cannot refuse, since

it is a question of health; but are you quite, quite sure your own dear health will not suffer? We must not be selfish——'

'No fears, thanks. My health is as sound as a bell. And I shall not—ahem!—stop in town; that might be rather too much of a good thing; I am thinking of country lodgings somewhere.'

'Lodgings! Could you not stop here? Why should you go to lodgings when your own brother's house—and we always leave servants in it—indeed, indeed they would do their best to make you comfortable.'

'Thank you, Priscilla, I am sure they would; but, to tell the honest truth, Beech Hall without you in it would be unbearable;' and there was just enough accent on the 'You' to make one pair of eyes twinkle knowingly. Thomas was listening to the conversation.

'Ay, ay,' said he, to himself.

Priscilla also felt a little delightful thrill. Dear William!—of course she had not thought of that. No doubt the big house would be dull, and sad, and solitary, if he had it all to himself.

But then it was within three miles of The Nook, and though matters were not progressing in that direction as fast as she could have wished, they were still jogging along.

Her own wooing had been of the briefest; and it had seemed to her that a few nice meetings, a Sunday walk or two, and a dinner and stroll in the twilight after it (she had taken a world of pains about that dinner), ought to have brought the affair to a head.

As it was, William went and came, and seemed always ready to meet the Colvin girls, and to talk to any one of the Colvin girls whom Fate—or she—threw in his way.

For that was another perplexity. Which of the three was it? She praised Bet; she began by praising Bet after the luncheon party; feeling very large-minded and ready to sink her own previous predilection in a moment, if need were; and William had cheerfully endorsed all encomiums, adding, moreover, one or two of his own.

Bet, then, it must be.

But at the very next talk he was equally in favour of Georgie. Georgie was quite as pretty and amusing as her sister; and it appeared that he had undertaken a commission for the 'little one' which was costing him some trouble.

He made no secret of the commission—nor of the trouble.

Still, he liked doing it; said openly that he liked being made

of use by charming young ladies; and at the word 'charming' smiled. Perhaps then it was Georgie after all.

For some little time she vibrated between these two, feeling, as most people did, that Poll was less attractive and piquant, and that though the sisters wore the same clothes, somehow Poll's hats did not so invariably become her as those of Bet and Georgie became them.

But one day Mrs. Tom had a surprise. She was talking of inviting two of the Misses Colvin to dinner (the dinner above mentioned), and as it was in the days when Georgie's star was in the ascendant, the wording of the invitation became a matter of difficulty, Poll having a prior claim.

'Shall I just say two, and leave it to themselves?' quoth our hostess, in consultation.

'That would do,' said William.

'It would be so unfortunate if dear little Georgie were to feel herself left out.'

'She can't expect to go everywhere, you know.'

'But *here*,' murmured Priscilla. 'She might think—she might particularly wish to come here——'

'Or again, she might not. After all,' said her brother-in-law, after a pause, during which Mrs. Tom was wondering what he meant, or if he meant anything except to baffle her, 'after all, one does generally invite the two eldest when it is a formal affair, doesn't one? Miss Georgie is scarcely out of the school-room; dinner-parties can't be much in her line as yet. Suppose you do the thing ceremoniously, and ask the two others and their brother?'

'He cannot come. He is obliged to stay late in his office every night at present. That was why I felt we might break up their party. It would be two and two. It would be cruel to take three out, and leave one alone at home.'

'She would be alone anyway, it appears.'

'Oh, no; Lionel is down by half-past eight, but too late to dine out; probably tired too. At any rate, they refused for him.'

'Oh, you have talked it over with them?'

'Only in the abstract; I thought I would consult you before giving a definite invitation. We had to see what day you would be free.'

'I should invite the two eldest,' said William, decisively.

'Miss Poll is quite as charming as her sisters, once you get to

know her. She only needs a little more knowing,' and he looked as if he had obtained the knowledge.

What if it should be Poll?

And after the dinner-party Mrs. Tom was by no means sure that it was not Poll.

'Dear William is of a reticent disposition,' she told herself, and it was not unusual for a reticent man to be even more than ordinarily so when his heart was engaged. The very fact that he had paid the eldest and the youngest Miss Colvin severally more attention in public might point to a secret leaning towards the little frog in the middle whom others overlooked.

He certainly did make for Poll directly the gentlemen emerged from the dining-room; and though he did not persistently remain by her side, he seemed quite as ready to be there as elsewhere.

There was no seizing upon opportunities, no instant disentangling of himself from an interrupted *lête-à-tête* (Priscilla brought up a nice young man to Poll on purpose), but her brother-in-law stayed where he was, and talked to the nice young man too.

And then, just as she was sending Bet off into the verandah with Thomas, to pluck the sweet-scented orange-blossoms from the plants which stood there in their great green tubs, what should dear William do but step across the room and follow? No one else went, and everyone saw him go.

And presently Thomas came in, laughing; and Bet had a spray, thick with bud and blossom, in her breast, when she was found still outside by the rest of the party at the close of the evening.

'He cannot quite make up his mind,' nodded Priscilla, to herself. 'That is because there are so many of them; all so sweet and pretty. Had there been only one—like me——?' For Thomas had given her no trouble.

June and July passed, and things were still the same.

Now it was one, now the other. But of this Mrs. Tom was safely sure, the nest had been found from which eventually a dear girl would be taken to be 'one of themselves'—a new, bright, winsome, lovable, and teachable Farrell,—one who would be as full-filled with happiness and pride, and wonder at her great good fortune, as ever little Prilly Evans had been, and whom she would hail with tears of tenderness and sisterly rejoicing for dear William's sake.

Further than that, she meditated self-abnegation. 'He has got so into the habit of consulting me, and leaning on my opinion, that it might be trying for a young wife; I should have to break

him of it. Tell him, firmly and decidedly, that *I* am no longer the person to go to. Even if she were rather young and inexperienced, was not *I* the same?' reflected Mrs. Tom, without the slightest notion that young and inexperienced she had remained all her life. 'Did I not set myself to learn my husband's wishes and study his comfort, and be to him all that he had a right to expect, even from the very first day?' with a glow of conscious merit. 'He thought far, far too highly of poor little me—but dear William would be just as blind. And I would do my part; never, never would I seek to open his eyes, even if his dear little wife were rather foolish and forgetful just at the first. I would take her by herself, and point out any little mistakes. I would tell her to come to me, as Emma does. Dear Emma is quite a pattern.'

Such day-dreams were delicious. She longed to have another pattern; to form and shape, protect and beam upon another Farrell bride. It seemed almost weak of dear William to be so long—she had almost said 'vacillating'—had such a word not been treasonable as applied to a member of the great 'Ourselves.'

'Brother Bill does not seem to get on, eh?' said Thomas, once.

'He is more difficult to please than you were,' modestly responded she.

'Is that it? Certainly he takes his time. You are sure he is going on with it, though? Not bamboozling you?'

Oh, dear, no! Mrs. Tom was quite sure she was not being bamboozled; was mildly indignant at the idea. Who had ever tried to bamboozle her? Was she a likely person for bamboozlement?

'Well, I didn't suppose so,' assented fat Thomas, stolidly.

The suggestion, however, had rankled, and intruded itself unpleasantly more than once of late, so that it was with a twinge of vague alarm that Priscilla's eyes wandered towards her husband's face, when she saw that he was weighing in the balance his brother's refusal of Beech Hall as a location during the absence of its owners.

'Does he mean to bring it to an end and take this opportunity of cutting off all connection with the neighbourhood?' said Thomas's look.

For himself he did not care one way or the other. If Priscilla hankered after the match, he would be glad to have her gratified by its coming off; but if it did not come off, it would be rather a joke against Priscilla.

He stood lazily by, thinking of the German waters; and pre-

sently fell to musing what clothes might be useful there, and whether his light suit would be light enough? If not, could his tailor send out to him something thin, cool——

'Thomas knows it; he will say the same,' cried Priscilla's voice, in accents of joyful excitement. 'Thomas, is it not a delightful idea? The White Farm? Is it not the very place for him?'

'Eh?' said Thomas, blinking his eyes. 'The White Farm? What about the White Farm?'

'I have been suggesting it to dear William; and he quite falls in with the idea. For lodgings, you know. He had not thought of finding any hereabouts, and was talking of going up the river—but the river is so crowded and noisy. Now, this nice, quiet neighbourhood——'

'Not bracing enough;' Thomas shook his head. 'It gets awfully hot out here in August, Bill.'

'But dear William says he does not mind,' eagerly interposed his spokeswoman, with a look which from another wife would have conveyed 'Hold your tongue, Stupid!'—'and it is not everybody who needs bracing air. Besides the river is certainly not bracing;' triumphantly.

'I don't care a rap about bracing,' said William.

Climatic considerations were thus disposed of.

'Wouldn't you find it dull?' demanded Thomas, next. 'Priscilla is so keen to have you here, she forgets that we shall be away ourselves and most of our neighbours, too. You would have the place pretty much to yourself.'

'I should like that.'

'And they do not *all* go,' insinuated Priscilla, blushing and significant. 'Thomas is thinking of the Stephens, and Charles and Emma——'

'All the decent houses,' persisted he.

'It would be the same everywhere;' William stroked his beard placidly; 'one can't expect to find people who can get away sticking on at home in the holiday months. And, to tell the truth, I would as soon be let alone for a time; I could read, and loaf, and enjoy the country air. What sort of place is this White Farm, Priscilla? A farmhouse might suit me very well; cows mooing and turkeys gobbling, sounds alluring in my jaded ears. Is it well away from the haunts of men?'

'Not *very* well away,' hesitated she. 'It is quite five miles from here——'



'Come, that's a respectable distance.'

'And down a by-lane, a most romantic by-lane, all roses and honeysuckle——'

'Roses are over now,' interposed the damping Thomas.

'We do not often pass that way, because the lane is rather full of cart-ruts, and the briars from the hedges sprawl out so far that our coachman thinks they scratch the carriage,' explained Priscilla; 'but I *have* been; Emma drove me in her little cart down the lane the other day; and we both admired the White Farm so very much. Emma said people often sketched it.'

'Do you know that they take lodgers?'

'Emma said artists often stayed there.'

'And it would not be too far from the station?'

'Oh, *no* distance, my dear William. That is the beauty of it. There is a footpath over the fields to Hale Edge station——'

'I suppose I should get to Liverpool Street under an hour?'

'Much under——'

'Nothing of the kind,' grunted Thomas, who was a stickler for small truths; 'very little under—if any. Of course there might be quick trains morning and evening,' he allowed.

'I could inquire. If it were any reasonable time—say three-quarters——?' pondered his brother.

'I am *sure* you could get up in three-quarters,' struck in Mrs. Tom again. 'And oh, William, I *know* it is the place for you! Don't listen to Thomas'—she was quite beyond listening to Thomas in her excitement and exultation. 'Let me go and arrange with the people. I only hope they will have rooms. And may I take the rooms if they have? Will you trust me? Will you commission me?'

'With the greatest pleasure,' said he, cordially.

'For next week,' Priscilla's eyes sparkled. 'If I can get them for next week; or as soon after as they are vacant—that is, of course, if they are to be vacant any time soon? Oh, I am so pleased, so delighted! The White Farm will suit you ever so much better than poky, stuffy lodgings on the river, overrun with earwigs. The earwigs are perfectly dreadful there, William; they are indeed.'

'Earwigs are a nuisance,' said he, seriously.

'Horrible creatures! And the Brownings—you know the Brownings? Well, they took a lovely little house near Maidenhead last summer; with fuchsias hanging from the roof, and the windows scarcely to be seen for clematis and jessamine; like a



little bower, they said; and at first they were enchanted with it, —but it turned out to be a perfect nest of earwigs! Earwigs swarmed over everything! Mrs. Browning had to shake them out of her cap before putting it on! Oh, my dear William, you must not be allowed to become a martyr to earwigs, and for *our* sakes!’ with pathetic earnestness.

‘The earwigs have settled it, Priscilla.’

‘Now at the White Farm,’ pursued she, with renewed spirit, ‘you would be quite safe from anything of that kind. Thomas, what are you laughing at? Oh, you think I don’t know——’

‘Speaking off the book, old lady. Have you ever been inside the White Farm?’

‘We have no earwigs in the neighbourhood,’ replied Mrs. Tom, with dignity. (Earwigs in a Farrell neighbourhood! She quite reddened at the idea.) ‘And when a place looks so clean and wholesome outside—and artists stay there——’

‘The presumption is in its favour. I think Priscilla has made out her case,’ said William, approvingly. ‘Her argument is that a house, like a man, should be held to be innocent till proved guilty. I am with you, Priscilla.’

‘And the farm produce, dear William. You would get ducks, and chickens, and nice fresh vegetables—cucumbers even, for Emma pointed out to me a row of cucumber and melon frames—and there was a delicious little orchard at the back, with apple and pear trees simply laden. We both said we had never seen trees with so much fruit.’

‘Sounds quite a Paradise. Really, Priscilla, you are no end of a good fairy to have discovered such a spot. By all means insert your unworthy brother into it, if you can; and about the terms, give them anything they ask.’

But it appeared that a gentleman had been looking at the rooms when Priscilla in hot haste drove over to the White Farm on the following morning. Priscilla was driven by a stable boy—Coachy flatly refusing to be privy to any such iniquity,—and she rattled off in a light, undignified Whitechapel cart, a thing she never set foot in except in cases of emergency, literally trembling with impatience.

For she had never said a word about the proximity of the White Farm to a certain small residence, which was only a few fields off; and neither had the prospective occupant of the one alluded to the other.

Did he know? He must know. He knew that Hale Edge

was the station which would naturally have been the one for Lionel Colvin to make use of, but that Lionel as a rule bicycled over to an important junction a mile or two further off, whence there was a quicker service of trains to the City. When not pressed for time, however, he invariably went and came *viâ* Hale Edge.

Of this Mrs. Tom felt confident her brother-in-law was aware, and his absolute silence on the subject said more than words. She had originated the scheme, and settled on the White Farm—of which he did not appear ever to have heard—but he could not have been ignorant of Hale End station being in the vicinity of The Nook.

‘I dare say he does not guess *how* near, though,’ she hugged herself exultingly.

It was too tiresome to be met by what seemed at first a ‘stopper’ on the whole thing. Her face fell by twenty degrees as worthy Mrs. Marjorum, the ideal of a farmer’s spouse, stood before her fingering her apron corner, very sorry, very unwilling to say it, but obliged to confess that a gentleman *had* called, and had seemed pleased with the rooms; worse than all, that she had promised to let him have them, should he write within the next few days.

‘Oh dear, dear me!’ cried Mrs. Tom, in grievous dismay.

Her disappointment and vexation were so extreme and undisguised that the farmer’s kind-hearted dame felt almost as badly herself, and looked to right and to left, trying to think what could be done. She had been busy furbishing up the pretty parlour, and putting up newly washed curtains in the sunny little bedroom, and had no manner of doubt as to the gentleman’s ultimate decision.

‘All our parties as comes like the farm,’ said she, proudly. ‘Oh yes, we lets rooms every summer, ma’am, regular. They have only been vacant since Monday. We have one gentleman, a hartiss, as stays here every spring when the damsons are in bloom. He paints them for the exhibitions. And in June, when it’s the roses, there’s a fam’ly——’

‘But you are not *quite* settled? There is a chance?’

‘Of course, ma’am, a chance; will you come in and see? We might hear to-day. The gentleman, he said it wasn’t any fear that the rooms wouldn’t suit, he was as pleased as he could be with all he saw; says he, “I couldn’t wish for nothing better;” it was his own affairs——’

'Yes, yes; I understand.'

'Come in, ma'am; you might just look round.'

And when the lady had looked round she was more eager than ever.

'They are perfect, quite perfect,' cried she. ('Everything that I told dear William;' mentally.) Aloud: 'I should take them on the spot——'

'Indeed, ma'am, I wish you could'—for such enthusiasm was flattering and infectious—'I wish with all my heart you could; but you see how it is. If you had only come a few days ago!' And the good woman sighed regretfully.

'There is a telegraph boy coming up the lane now!' Mrs. Tom, who had turned to depart, stopped short with a sudden conviction that the best or the worst was about to happen. 'Was he to telegraph?' she cried, devouring the boy with her eyes.

'As like as not. Yes, that's Tommy,' pronounced the mistress of the farm, peering over an intervening bush. 'Not hurrying himself, neither,' parenthetically;—'Tommy needs speaking to. That laddie stops to look in at every gate. But he's coming here, ma'am, and it is lucky you shouldn't be gone, for now you'll know; I daresay it's to take the rooms'—unable, despite herself, to 'daresay' anything else.

It seemed almost as incredible to her as it was to her companion when a single sentence on the magic pink paper cut the Gordian knot and placed the coveted possessions at Mrs. Tom's disposal.

'Oh dear—dear me!' cried the latter afresh, but this time with a new intonation. 'How extraordinarily fortunate! How delightful! Sets you entirely free to make your own arrangements. Well, *now*!' and she beamed victory and congratulations.

'I'm sure I'm very glad, ma'am.' After a moment's hesitation, during which surprise had been worthy Mrs. Marjorum's predominant emotion (for the wording of the telegram was peculiar, and might have almost affronted her had no second string to her bow been actually twanging in her ear), after a slight pause, we say, the good wife recovered herself and spoke as civility and policy dictated. 'I am glad you can have your way, ma'am. And to be sure, gentlemen has calls upon them; and he did say he couldn't settle anything—so if you think *you* can settle?' with a faint inflection of doubt, suggestive of lost faith and a poorer opinion of mankind thenceforth.

On Mrs. Tom, however, devolved the task of restoring peace to

the troubled bosom ; and before Mrs. Tom left, 'All's well that ends well' was written on the dame's ample brow.

The rooms were engaged, absolutely and definitively engaged. 'From to-day, if you like,' cried the lady, extravagant in her joy, —but 'No, thank you, ma'am ; no need for that,' rejoined the other, with humble stateliness. 'We wouldn't take money for nothing.'

'Oh, dear ; that was not what I was thinking of ; indeed I did not mean to be rude. It was only that I was so afraid of anything happening—of anyone else—and these dear, delightful rooms,' explaining and apologising all in a flutter ; 'you see we so nearly lost them,' wound up the speaker, with an earnestness so abject that it could not but make all smooth. 'Well now, it is settled ; and I may tell my brother-in-law, Mr. William Farrell—you have got the name down?—that he can come in on Tuesday next?'

'On Tuesday next the rooms will be ready for him, ma'am.'

With what unction and fine dramatic effect did Priscilla render this scene to brothers Thomas and William the same evening ! William had come out on purpose to hear the result of the expedition.

'It seems to have been a close shave,' said he, sympathetically.

'Prilly feels herself quite a heroine,' added Thomas.

'I assure you I shook all over when I saw that tiresome little boy dawdling up the lane,' cried she. 'And Mrs. Marjorum seemed so certain that the telegram would be to take the rooms. She looked almost a little disconcerted when she found it was not. Only for the moment ; because she was quite, quite ready and pleased to have you, dear William ; but I fancy she thought it a kind of slight—of course it was nothing of the kind, but *that* was what she was thinking of, I could see. She could not believe that anyone who had once seen the rooms at the White Farm could endure to go anywhere else. I am sure I fully agreed with her.'

'Who was the gentleman she spoke of?'

'She did not know his name.'

'You must have seen it on the telegram?'

'There was no name. To save a halfpenny, I suppose. Some people are so odd about stinting words in telegrams.'

'I always do,' said William. 'I never see the force of signing my name when it can be from no one else. Probably the farm-woman's friend knew she wasn't likely to have telegrams from two people putting her off.'

'I dare say,' easily; Priscilla thinking of something else.

'It is quite certain he meant to put her off? There would be no fear of our clashing?'

'Oh, my dear William, set your mind at rest about that! I forget the exact words, but no one could mistake their meaning.'

'I thought you said she seemed rather mystified?'

'I said it was oddly expressed, and Mrs. Marjorum—but of course *I* understood in a moment, "Make your own arrangements." What else could a telegram saying "Make your own arrangements" mean?'

He appeared satisfied.

'But sir, sir! You are the same gentleman!' exclaimed the mistress of the White Farm when on the day appointed Mr. William Farrell, with portmanteaux and travelling bags on the top of a station fly, drove up the lane, and alighted at her front door.

'The very same gentleman,' laughed he.

'Was it—was it a hoax, sir?' stammering a little.

'Not at all a hoax, my good woman; get in the things and let him help you; he can carry them upstairs,' indicating the flyman,—'and then I'll explain,' said Mr. Farrell, looking about him with the air of a man well pleased but not curious. He knew the White Farm perfectly.

'No, Mrs. Marjorum;' he threw himself down in the big chair of the sitting-room, as soon as all was still, and the fly had rattled off; 'it was not a put-up job; at least for no evil ends. The fact is,' confidently, 'you ladies do love your own way, now don't you?'

'Oh, sir!'—holding the question over, wondering what was coming next.

'Well, my brother's wife does—the lady who came and took the rooms for me,—and I, being a peaceable man, give her her head, do you understand? No, I see you don't. Well, then, Mrs. Farrell had set her heart upon my coming here, and had no notion that I had set mine on the same thing. She thought she had found the place for me, ha, ha, ha! Don't you ever let out, Mrs. Marjorum; it would be cruel to undeceive her; and, and that's about all.'

'Certainly, sir.'

But he took a quick look, and saw that she was still twisting her apron.

'You don't think that will quite cover it? You are a very intelligent person, mistress; and you are perfectly in the right.

Well, I'll tell you some more. Mrs. Thomas Farrell is one of the best and kindest of human beings; I have a great regard for her'—his tone carried sincerity—and she would have been hurt, really and truly hurt, had she known that I was prospecting round here for a roost, and would not accept her own hospitality. She offered me her house; my brother's house. It would not have suited me at all. I wanted nice, bright, cheery quarters like these. When she thought she had herself selected them for me, it was all right. I wired ambiguously,—the word puzzled her, and he changed it—'vaguely, you understand? vaguely; in order to clear the coast, without betraying myself. An innocent little deception; and *now* you understand?'

She did, or thought she did. Her brow cleared.

'They are off for a long absence. Probably she will never come here again; at any rate, not till I am out of the way, and nothing need be said. Or, even if it should come out by-and-by, Mrs. Tom would be amused at the little joke. Now, what about dinner?'

'He's a nice, kind-hearted creature,' thought the farmer's wife.

Her dinner was irreproachable, and was appreciated to her heart's content. Henceforth she had nothing but praise for her new lodger.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

'MY DEARS, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF ME?'

HE was the nicest, quietest, consideratist, most easy-pleased of any gentleman as ever was.

'You ask Mrs. Marjorum for my character,' William Farrell told his friends. '*She* is the person I shall apply to for a testimonial when the Lord Chancellor's or the Archbishop of Canterbury's post is in the market. She wouldn't hide my light under a bushel. The dear soul thinks I am out of place on this side Jordan; my true element is up there,' looking skywards with a laugh.

The friends laughed too, as in duty bound; but they took Mrs. Marjorum to their hearts from that day forward, for who and what were the auditors who listened with all their ears to such sweet sounds? Three tender saplings, in whom the wine of life was still limpid dew, clear as crystal and as pure and sparkling.

No place was like the White Farm to Bet, Poll, and Georgie now. They could see its red-tiled roof from their windows, and loved even the pale blue smoke which curled up from its chimneys.

They walked down the lane, and culled water-lilies from the ponds in the field hard by during the daytime when no one was there (we can guess whom 'No one' stood for)—they found that blackberries were ripening on the warm railway-bank just beyond the farm precincts; they discovered a nut wood in the same direction.

And why should they cling to a hot, dusty, be-travelled high-road which glared in the sun those sweltering August days, when there were shady by-paths and pleasant hedge-rows to be found for the seeking?

True, they had to use their feet, for Solon was out at grass, and no bicycles could traverse the rough, rutty track left by winter mud, even when the farm lane was reached, while to reach it they had to file singly along the merest thread of a field path; but the weather was too hot for bicycling, one and all agreed; and perhaps they might have found it too hot for any form of exertion had not a new territory been discovered.

As it was, hearken to Bet. She has strolled outside, and found her sisters ensconced beneath a tree. 'Come along for a walk,' ordains she, with sisterly concern for the family health. 'Come along, it's good for us. One gets stale sitting still all day.'

But as they had not been sitting all day, the other two raised a protest. They had had a great game of 'bumble-puppy,' and if Bet had joined them she would not have been stale, but comfortably tired, and ready as they now were to be still awhile.

'Well, I'm not,' said Bet, waiving the question, 'and I don't feel inclined to be still. Come! it isn't hot now.' The afternoon sun was beginning to cast long shadows over the grass.

'It is cool enough here, but it would be woeful outside,' pleaded Poll; while Georgie lifted her head and looked this way and that for an excuse.

'Get up, you lazy, limp, stupid thing,' flung out Bet, and pointed the command with her toe. 'When I tell you to get up, *get up*.'

The limp one made a feint of obeying, then sank down again. 'Won't it do if——'

'No, it won't. Do as you're told.'

'Poll, we are to do as we're told. Do you hear, Poll?'

'Bother!' said Poll.



'I have brought a basket, and we can gather something,' continued Bet, as though the matter were settled. 'There are heaps of things ripe now. Leave the cushions and books, and we can bring them in when we come back. Put on your hats,' holding them out as she spoke, 'and we can go through the garden gate.' She turned off, prepared to lead the way.

'Where shall we go?' demanded Georgie, as with dragging steps the two unwilling recruits followed. 'Not very far. Say you won't go very far?'

But on they went all the same till within sight of the White Farm; since once started even the laggards gained sufficient strength to cover the intervening space. No one had suggested another direction.

'His windows are open, Bet.' It was Georgie who thought her eyes were quicker than her sister's; she did not know that Bet had seen the open windows at the turn of the path half a field before. 'I can see his chair, and a table in front of it. Mrs. Marjorum must have taken down the curtains.'

'To wash them,' pronounced Poll.

'She could not want to wash them yet,' considered Bet, now looking openly, since all were doing the same. 'He has only been there a fortnight. Curtains keep clean a longer time than that out here, where there is no dust from the road.'

'Then, what can they have been taken down for?' It was Poll's turn for conjecture.

'I don't believe they are down. I believe I see them. Look, I am sure I see a bit of white,' cried Georgie, excitedly. 'On one side I see——'

'No, you don't,' said Bet. She didn't; and if she didn't, no one else should.

'But I do,' persisted the other, bent on proving her superiority of vision. 'There it is, quite plain; a streak of white. He has tucked it in at the back of his chair.'

'And what if he has?' A closer inspection by the sceptic confuted her denial, but Miss Colvin was never at a loss. 'There is no need to set up such a riot about it. What is there to shriek at?' said she, severely. 'I suppose a man may tuck in his own window-curtain, if he prefers to let more air into the room, without asking our leave? For my part, I hate curtains, especially muslin ones; and there must be a beautiful view from those windows.'

'And he has been sitting there looking at it before he left



this morning,' deduced Georgie, with undiminished delight in her own perspicuity. 'Let's wait here a minute, Bet,' for a stile, with steps on either side, stood invitingly near, and was, truth to tell, a favourite halting-place with the three. 'Let's sit down, and see what we can see,' settling herself with her face in the choice direction.

'I suppose there can be no harm,' murmured Bet, following her example. 'It is nice to sit down; and I do love this bit of the lane with that dear little gurgling brook, it has such a splashy, washy sound——'

'It makes me want to splashy, washy in it!' Georgie leaned over and looked down. 'How I wish we could! Bet, don't you think we might take off our shoes and stockings, at any rate?'

'No, indeed,' said Bet, sharply. 'Like cottage girls! When will you learn that one can't do everything one would like to do? Fancy Mr. Farrell's face if he found us wading about in his brook!'

'He would wade too. No, I daresay he wouldn't. Men don't look nice wading,' allowed Georgie. 'They have such horrid white feet. Do you remember our odious Frenchman at Dover? How he would wade in three inches of water, picking up sea-snails and things? I remember now the look of his nasty white feet. And he used to dry them with his pocket-handkerchief.'

'As you would like to do,' scoffed her mentor.

'Well, mayn't we just wash our faces? Mine is so hot.'

'And so is mine,' said Poll, removing her hat.

So was Bet's; and she too longed for the cool laving of the stream. Not even a haymaker was in sight, nor did so much as the rumble of cart-wheels break the stillness of the surrounding landscape. She slipped down from her perch.

'I daresay we might just do that. Come quickly, then, and creep along the wall. Keep close to the bridge.' Keeping very close herself, she stole streamwards. 'Georgie, don't go forgetting, and running out where you can be seen——'

'But there is no one to see.'

'You never can tell. If you won't promise to behave, I sha'n't take you.'

'Take me, indeed! Catch me if you can.'

With the roguish glee of an imp of six, Miss Pert was already out of reach, and another few minutes saw all three lying flat on the green bank, their hands in the running water, their flushed and sun-tanned cheeks partaking of the cool refreshment.

Suddenly, in the spirit of mischief, Georgie popped in her whole head.

'I really never thought I could do it, Bet; and I couldn't help trying. I just had to try. *Oo*, it is delicious,' dripping and triumphant. 'It is all running in little trickles down my back,' enchanted.

'Did you allow her, Bet?' said Poll, with solemn envy. 'I thought you said it was to be only our faces.'

'Here, let me rub you.' Putting the one aside, Bet took hold of the other's curly head, now glistening like a seal's in the sun, and with a handkerchief in each hand squeezed and rubbed. She could not find it in her head to be angry, so pretty, and so bold and babyish looked the culprit. 'You don't deserve it, but——' and she rubbed vigorously.

'Bet, dear Bet, do pop in your head too.' Perceiving herself thus cheaply let off, it was not in human nature to be satisfied, and Curly-pate essayed her small arts afresh. 'It is so fresh and cool,' she cried; 'I feel quite revived. Bet, if you would put yours in, I would rub you——'

'With what? Your wringing-wet handkerchief?'

'I have on a new white petticoat. Look,' holding up the cotton skirt of her frock; 'new on to-day. Let me take it off——'

'No, no,' hastily.

'But I don't mind, I should *like* to do it; and you should feel how lovely a wet head is; and my hair will be all curly-up again by the time we get home. So would yours; Poll's wouldn't; she——'

'Bet,' said Poll, in a low voice.

She was looking away from the others. Something in her tone startled them.

'What is it?' said Bet, quickly.

'I don't know; I don't know if it is anything. But I thought I saw——' She paused.

'What? Saw what? Georgie, put down your skirt;' for it was gathered up preparatory to Georgie's act of sacrifice. 'Put it down!' with trenchant authority, and a strong hand enforced the command. 'Where did you see anything, Poll?' The speaker turned with a little tremor to her sister.

'Over that wall. Someone was looking at us. It might have been only a farm man. I thought it was; so I said nothing to you while you were busy with Georgie; it would have only flustered you; but——'

'You fluster me now. Why do you look so scared? After all, a farm man would think nothing of it. He would not know who we were, or anything about us.'

'But—it wasn't a farm man.'

'Who was it?' But Bet knew.

'Come home this minute,' she said, in a cold, strangled voice. 'I said we should be caught; I knew we should. Why would you insist on doing what you knew you shouldn't? You made me give in to you,'—hurrying up the bank and through the lane as if pursued by furies,—'it serves us all three right,' she muttered as she went.

On either side the other two sped in silence with equal haste. It was not till they were half a mile away that anyone spoke again.

Then it was Georgie's voice, subdued and doleful, which faintly essayed the query, How did Poll know that it was—he?

'It is more to the point, Did he know that it was us?' broke out Bet, fiercely. 'Our backs were turned, and the wall was—was a little way off. If you did not know him at first——'

'But then I only saw a face.'

'You can't be sure *now*?' cried her sister, with a wild hope. Poll was silent.

Georgie stole a look. 'Are you sure, Poll?'

'Quite,' said Poll.

She had had a second view, having stolen up the bank and peeped along the lane. 'I saw him, himself,' she groaned.

Later on, when the eldest and youngest were by themselves, Georgie sought to comfort and be comforted.

'Was it so very bad, Bet? Don't other girls do those sort of things?'

'I dare say they do, and it doesn't matter for them,' said poor Bet, with bitter emphasis. 'Other girls have fathers and mothers to look after them, and can do many things that we poor scratch-packs can't——'

'Don't call us "scratch-packs;" we're not that now.'

'We've got a home; and we've got a brother; and people just let us into their houses, and don't look the other way when we meet upon the road. But they watch to see what we do, and how we behave ourselves; and no one takes us naturally, as they do the daughters of their friends. Even Mrs. Tom, kind as she is——'

'Why, Bet, she *loves* us now.'

'With a very nervous love; she is always afraid of letting herself go. Oh, Maud and Mildred Farrell might have bathed like nymphs in that stream, but for us 'to wash our faces——'

'And my head,' ruefully.

'Georgie, did you ever hear the saying that one man may steal a horse, while another man may not even look over the hedge? That's us.'

'No, it's him,' quoth Georgie, promptly. 'He looked over the hedge, or the wall, or whatever it was.'

'And went away,' said Bet, setting her teeth. 'That showed——showed what he thought.'

'Well, I'm sorry, but I do think you make too much of it. I can't see that what would be nothing in those wonderfully proper-behaved Farrell girls can be such an awful iniquity in us.'

'If you don't see, you ought to be made to see. Do you want me to begin all over again——'

'Oh no; not at all,' hastily.

'When I've been explaining and explaining——'

'Well, I *don't* want it.'

'And you are so dense; you can't understand—but you have got to be made to understand. Do you want him, Mr. Farrell, to look down on us?' with cruel directness.

'Of course I don't want that.'

'He will, then. He is very good and kind, and has never yet treated us with anything but respect; but Lionel says if men find you are "larky," and don't care how familiar they are, they will be ready enough to take advantage of it. Lionel has always said that.'

'We are never "larky and familiar" with him.'

'We try not to be. We don't mean to be. Even you——'

'I do try, Bet; you know I do,' tearfully. 'It isn't fair to say "even" me. Poll lectured me because I was too grown-up-ish the other day, and said I was absurd. How can I be both absurd and——and larky?'—choking over the injustice.

'I didn't say you were; I said you tried not to be. That was what I was going to say when you wouldn't hear me out. But this will——'

'Oh, no, it won't, Bet. Bet, I don't believe he could be so mean as to turn against us, just because he spied us when we were all by ourselves——'

'Behaving like charity-school children.'

'Nothing of the sort,' retorted Georgie, with spirit. 'Charity-

school children would never have thought of it. They're not so keen on cold water.'

'They are keen on doing anything they shouldn't, anything improper and unwholesome. If we had been little girls of ten or twelve——'

'I am sure I often feel as if I were ten or twelve. I can't help it, I feel ever so much littler than I used to do. Don't you remember how old and miserable we often felt?'

'Yes, yes,' said Bet, hurriedly.

'When we had nowhere to go, and nobody to think for us but ourselves. You used to sit and worry, and wonder if there were nothing you could do? And once you said you would have to go out as a governess; and aunt Sophia withered you up——'

'Because we were *her* niece's children.'

'And you declared you would put that into the advertisement! Well done you! You did make old Soph mad,' gloating over the retrospect.

'I daresay,' said Bet, restlessly. 'I felt so often mad myself that—but it doesn't matter now. We are done with the whole lot of them. Even Lionel looks as if he hardly knows who is meant when Mr. Stephen Farrell says "Your uncle," and he does hate Lord Umfreville's name being dragged into the conversation.'

'It seems strange to think he is mother's own brother, though;' Georgie mused for a moment. 'Bet, do you suppose we shall never see any more of him than we do now?'

'Of course not; why should we?'

'Oh, I don't want him,' quickly. 'It was only that—I wonder if Lady Blanche Massitur knew——'

'My conscience! you don't suppose—what on earth are you supposing? Lady Blanche Massitur thinks of us as the dirt of the earth, if she knows there is such dirt. She doesn't even call on the Farrells—except—oh, I believe the Stephens do poke their noses inside her palings; they got at her in London; but there is not another gate in the neighbourhood she condescends to turn in at. You can't be so ridiculous as to fancy she would take any notice of us?'

'No, no; but we *are* better than the Farrells, Bet.'

'How are we better?' brusquely. The Farrells were now, it will be perceived, viewed with different eyes from heretofore.

'Well, we are better born,' said Georgie, courageously. 'And—and——'

'Well?'

'And that's all, I suppose;' the spurt dying out. 'But it is something to be better born,' urged she. 'It is; I don't care who says it is not. You have said it hundreds of times.'

'I don't now,' said Bet, calmly; 'I don't think it matters at all. You should read Tennyson, "'Tis only noble to be good," and her eyes took a sudden glow.

'Oh, I heard *him*, I heard him repeating that' With the quickness of a detective Georgie pounced. 'It may be very true, but Tennyson wasn't "noble," so he thought he might as well be "good"—now *don't* put me down, for I'm going to say it. You know how fond I am of—of over there,' laughing and indicating; 'I never call him "Billy," even to myself, because we made the name sound so detestable; but I'm not quite so besotted as you are—be quiet, there's no one to hear—and I hold to it that the Farrells are—are——'

'Go on; say anything you can against them.'

'I can't swallow a whole family because of one member of it. They are awfully nice, well-meaning people, but when I look at Lady Blanche Massitur and Leonora, I wince. It's true; I do. I know I could be friends with them, and let out before them, as I never can do before Mrs. Tom or any one of the Farrell crew. I passed Lady Blanche the other day, and she was laughing just as we laugh. Not as the Farrells laugh. And, Bet, I am sure she does not laugh like that before *them*, but she would before *us*——'

'What nonsense!'

Bet, however, was listening; listening, too, in some surprise. Usually it was she who made discoveries, and thought new thoughts for the rest; it was an unheard-of idea that one of them should be her instructor. Still, a faint essence of pre-Farrellite days had not so entirely faded out of all remembrance but that it re-asserted itself at the moment.

Georgie ran on. 'She would feel we were her sort—in a way,' qualifying the boldness before it was flouted.

'The Farrells—I am only speaking of them in the ruck, not of our Farrell, he is different—keep him out of your mind, and let me go on. The Farrells are not quite—quite. Lady Blanche is. We are—in a way,' again the swift qualification. 'I asked Mr. Stephen about her, and he said she was a charming creature, stately but charming. I do not believe that she would be stately with us, if she knew us. But she can't bring herself to be merry

and laugh out, and talk nonsense with the Farrells. There! I know that's true. You may say what you like. I *know* it is.'

Bet was absolutely silent.

The next day a card was put into her hand; she looked at it, dumb.

'Lady Blanche Massitur,' read Georgie over her shoulder, and the eyes of the two met.

They were in the back-yard, cleaning their bicycles, with large white aprons on; Poll was further afield, no one knew where.

Silently the two aprons were untied, and the wearers rose to their feet. If the skies had fallen, neither one nor the other could have felt more convinced of a supernatural agency at work.

'They'll want to do themselves up a bit,' reflected Simmins, wishing he could have helped; for having himself discharged the thunderbolt, he thought it almost cruel to be standing by impotent. 'There's two ladies,' he announced, gratuitously; 'an old lady and a young one. About your own ages the young lady is;' thinking this information, though not of much importance, might do something. 'In the drawing-room they are; I said you was at home——' following as he spoke.

'Bring up tea,' said his mistress; Bet was always thought of as the mistress of The Nook.

To Georgie she said not a word, and the two marched straight into the drawing-room.

And the drawing-room, the familiar drawing-room, showed itself a strange and unknown place to their eyes as they entered. And the chair, Lionel's chair, whereon another person sat, looked a new piece of furniture, a curious thing—unique, unimaginable. And there was a ringing in Bet's ears, and a misty gleam before her eyes, as a tall figure reared itself upright at her approach, and a younger, slighter form also came between her and the light. And she looked at Georgie—and Georgie was another Georgie—a sparkling rosebud of a Georgie! Bet sat down.

Lady Blanche left her chair and moved to one nearer.

'My dears,' she said, bending her eyes first on one, then on the other (and who would have believed that hawk-like countenance could have rested so earnestly and tenderly on the countenances of two mere stranger girls?) 'my dears, have you ever heard of me?'

Heard of her? Of the great lady of the neighbourhood! The exalted personage of whom even the Farrells spoke with bated breath?



Besides, what about yesterday? Heard of her, indeed!

Bet could have found in her heart to giggle with hysterical mirth. What did all this mean?

She held her hands locked in each other. She bent her head. A little smile of polite assent was just permitted to appear.

'Not *really*, I see?' continued her ladyship, her accents vibrating between disappointment and interrogation. 'Only from our being neighbours? And to think I should never have known you *were* my neighbours till a week ago! How long have you been here, may I ask?'

'Since Novémbér. We——'

'Since November! Extraordinary! Never to have heard even your name! Leonora, my niece,' turning to the younger lady, who smiled in response, 'it seems she had heard, and never told me——'

'I could not tell that my aunt would be interested. And she never calls on people. There are so many, you know,' explained Leonora, as conscious of being appealed to: 'but *I* know you quite well by sight,' to Georgie, by whom she sat. 'You often bike our way, don't you?'

'And you stopped one day and asked if you could help us?' cried Georgie, radiant, flushed with pleasure. She *had* been noticed, then? 'The day my wheel got buckled, Bet,' explained she.

Bet, however, had her eyes fixed on her own visitor.

'It seems they had a meeting,' the elder lady again addressed her; 'and if my niece had mentioned it, I should have—but I ought to explain,' pursued Lady Blanche, looking kindly, earnestly, penetratingly at each in turn; then with a sudden quick catch of her breath—'Oh, you are both like—both! So like! But you, my dear, the most,' laying a hand on Bet's, and drawing it towards her. 'And you have never heard of your father's old friend—perhaps his very oldest friend? I knew him when I was about your age; and he—and he——'

'Did you? Did you really? Our father? Oh!'

'Oh!'

echoed Georgie, who had stopped her own side-talk to listen.

'My aunt has talked about him ever since she heard,' communicated Leonora, in a low voice. 'She heard accidentally when we were in town. We passed through town on our way back from the Continent, and stopped a week. We met your uncle, Lord Umfreville.'



'Now, am I to say we don't know anything about Lord Umfreville, or am I not?' cogitated Georgie. Bet could give her no lead at this crisis.

'Did he tell you about us?' she ventured, cautiously.

'He came up to speak to aunt Blanche, and wanted us all to do something together; and we couldn't, because we were coming down here; and when we said where, he seemed to recollect, and asked if we had met you?'

'He knew we——?'

'Knew all about you; and the funny thing was that *we* didn't! When you are living within a couple of miles of us!'

Here Lady Blanche's voice supervened. 'I said to Lord Umfreville, "Is it possible—is it *possible*?" For I had often wondered—I knew your poor mother was dead—but she had come to England, while Colonel Colvin remained in India, and I was not sure;'—she paused. She was not sure whether the colonel's wife had been allowed the charge of her children, or not? Possibly rumour for once had been kind, and spared the absent husband. At home, people certainly had whispered when Elizabeth Colvin's name came up for discussion. The Umfrevilles, her own people, had maintained an ominous silence concerning the lady's character and affairs. They never knew where she was, nor what she was doing. They replied in the vaguest terms when inquiries respecting her were not to be evaded.

It was supposed that her death was a relief; and as for the children? The children simply vanished, so far as public knowledge or curiosity was concerned.

'I could only suppose you had stayed, and perhaps settled down in India,' pursued her ladyship, who it will be remembered was still talking. 'Girls marry very young out there. And—and you have a brother? How is he? Where is he? What is he doing?' She longed to say, 'What is he like?' but curbed her tongue. What Lionel was like she would soon find out for herself.

'He is the eldest of us,' said Bet, a little bewildered. 'He is just twenty-five——'

'I know; and you are twenty-two; there are three years between you, because there was a child who died. And—but I lost count then. How many more are you?' Lost in interest she gazed from each to each, making no apology, but putting question after question with the freedom and directness of—shall we say a relation? These poor girls had never met with anything like this

from blood relations. Their pulses throbbed; they drew closer and closer round the speaker; and it was Bet, the proud, sensitive, world-defying Bet, who, completely overcome at last, sank to the floor by Lady Blanche's side, and throwing her arms across her new friend's knee, hid her face there.

The door opens, and enter Simmins, very grand, but somewhat ill at ease regarding his delayed appearance. He had been wrangling with his wife in the kitchen because the kettle would not boil, and a kettle that wouldn't boil at such a time, and for such visitors, was only fit for the dung-heap.

On such occasions he called Mrs. Simmins 'Cook,' and thought of her in that capacity.

She was a phlegmatic creature, and so slow in her methods that her soups were invariably good—soups as we know being fitter for eternity than for time in the matter of their composition.

But when, sinking the husband in the butler, Simmins demanded hot water for tea, it wasn't as if it was for soup he wanted it, cried he, in wrathful agitation, which fell on Cook accordingly. Every minute he expected to hear his bell, and Lady Blanche's departing steps upon the staircase.

And he knew, for he had been long at The Nook, who and what Lady Blanche was, and the honour her ladyship was doing the house. It was downright devilish of that there kettle not to boil.

It gave him time to set his tray well out, however, and a handsomer trayful was never borne upstairs than that now presented to the eyes of the small party assembled there.

'Settin' as quiet,' commented Simmins, 'as settin' 'ens.' He breathed a sigh of relief, and set out the tea-things.

'Have you sent round the carriage?' Suddenly Bet be-thought her of this. 'You won't go yet, will you, dear Lady Blanche?'

'We can't let you go yet,' added Georgie.

'I never thought of going,' replied her ladyship with the utmost artlessness. 'I consider myself cruelly ill-used to have been kept in ignorance of you two so long—and also of your brother and sister. Perhaps they will come in before we go? Oh, not Lionel? He will allow me to call him "Lionel," will he not? I wonder if I shall see a—a resemblance?'

'You will,' said Bet, fearlessly. 'We all do. And Lionel is

like our father in other things besides looks. He is father over again to us girls. Oh, Lady Blanche, I am so glad, so very glad, I can't tell you what it is to us, what it will be to him to know that we have found a friend—and such a friend! We don't seem able to believe it, Georgie and I,' smiling round at her sister, whose obvious enjoyment evinced the truth of her own prognostications, 'but when we come to tell the others!'

Simmins now stood back, and looked at his hissing urn suggestively.

Lady Blanche produced an ivory box of saccharine pellets. 'You see I made tolerably sure of finding you at home,' said she; 'and now, my dear Bet—I am to call you "Bet"?—will you begin from now to remember all my little oddities? Because we are going to see a great, great deal of each other; and you will often have to give me tea and all sorts of things. I never take sugar—never. Gout, my love. It is in the family. It is in the Umfreville family too; but I suppose you have not yet begun——'

'It wouldn't deign to us,' Bet shook her head; but even the old self-contempt was shorn of its bitterness at such a moment and in such a presence. 'Gout would be insulted by the very mention of us. It is only for the real Umfrevilles.'

'Your mother was a real Umfreville. And, by the way, who do you call "real" of those now living? There is Sophia; and the Geoffrey Umfrevilles, but they have no children; and—and—upon my word I can't think of any more except your uncle himself. Oh, there is an heir, you say?'

'Sydney, uncle George's son. We never saw uncle George; but we saw Sydney once. We didn't care for him.'

Lady Blanche let the subject drop.

But after her tea she had a stroll, and met Poll coming in from her sketching ramble. 'Another true Colvin,' cried she delightedly; and at the first superficial glance found the newcomer even more like her former friend than were his other daughters. (She came back to Bet presently; Poll lacked staying power.) 'Now I have seen you all except Lionel,' summed up she; 'and I know the house, and the garden, and the cat,' as a grey tabby emerged, and strolled leisurely past. 'It is the beginning of a great, great friendship. You will tell your brother so? Ask him to call. Say we shall be in—let me see——' pausing to consider.

'I am afraid Lionel is not able to make calls, except on

Saturdays,' said Bet, modestly but firmly. It was better to make this clear at the outset.

'And on Saturday next we have an engagement. But would he come to luncheon on Sunday? Yes? That will do, then; be sure you tell him. I don't ask any of the rest *this* time, because,' said Lady Blanche, who knew mankind, 'brothers get on better at a first meeting when the little sisters are not present; ' laughing frankly. 'Is it not so, my dear?'

Bet owned it was so. Lionel would be much more at ease and talkative if by himself.

'They are all like that,' said the elder lady, smiling. 'And he is quiet and reserved, you say? Like his father. So like his father.' Again the soft, retrospective look.

'Well, we shall look for him next Sunday, unless we hear to the contrary. Now, Leonora?'—and the speaker looked round. Leonora hastened up dutifully.

'We must tear ourselves away,' said Lady Blanche, in her best manner. 'It has been so pleasant; such a delightful discovery,'—then she paused, and bent anew her keen, hawk-like vision on the assembled three. 'But I am surprised that you had never just—just heard of me,' she murmured, wistfully.

. . . . .

'Heard of her?' said Lionel, when he was told. 'Why, of course we had heard of her? What could she mean? As if we could have helped hearing! Living close by, and she the chief person——'

'Oh, Lionel, it was not *that* she meant;' one and all proceeded to enlarge.

Lionel went off by himself, and thought.

When he came back, there was a look upon his face which arrested everyone's attention. 'Girls,' he said, and at the tone they fastened their eyes still more closely on him. 'Look here,' proceeded he, in a low, awe-stricken tone, 'it is the strangest thing if it is so. But I wonder we never thought of it before. I believe—I am sure—I have been looking to see, and I do believe that——'

'That what? Get on; do get on.' They were burning with impatience.

'That she is—Blanche,' said he, beneath his breath.

'Blanche?' It was the younger ones who alone found voice to echo the word, as they looked at each other in uncomprehend-

ing perplexity. The lips of the elder parted, but no sound escaped them.

'Bet knows,' said Lionel, in the same thrilling undertone. 'You tell them, Bet. I forgot they did not see the packet. I looked at it just now,' and he turned his head aside; he hated to exhibit emotion. Poll and Georgie looked eagerly at their sister.

'It's wonderful,' said she, with a deep sigh. 'Oh, Lionel, are you sure? But you would never have said it if you were not sure. You don't fly at things as we do. And, of course, that would explain.'

'Explain *what*? What would explain? You might tell us,' cried Georgie, shrilly, 'instead of looking at each other and saying it's wonderful. We want to know what's "wonderful" as well as you. And Lady Blanche looked at us all, not just at Bet, when she asked if we had never heard? She——'

'Be quiet; I am going to tell you.' Bet silenced volubility, which seemed out of place, and jarred on her, as she could see it did on her brother. 'Don't be so loud and noisy over it. You might guess it is not a thing to speak of. It—it has to do with our father,' in the reverent tone with which that name was invariably pronounced by any of Colonel Colvin's children.

'Oh!' said Georgie, subdued at once.

'Among our dear father's papers which were sent home to Lionel,' proceeded Bet, with a glance towards him, 'there was a packet labelled "Blanche." Lionel showed it me. We did not know at first whether we ought to open it or not. But in the letter,' she paused interrogatively, and they nodded apprehension.

'The letter' meant a sacred document written by the dying parent to his only son, in which were solemn charges and injunctions, together with such careful instructions and directions as might prove helpful in the various contingencies of life—the testament, in short, of an unselfish, tender-hearted, pious-minded soul upon the brink of eternity; and all knew that the faded scroll lay enshrined within a locked drawer, and that Lionel still read it sometimes when he was alone.

'In the letter,' proceeded Bet, perceiving they understood, 'our father bequeathed all his papers to Lionel; and said he was to understand there were no secrets from him. We thought he must have meant about the packet "Blanche," because just at the end of the letter—Lionel told me, for you know none of us have ever read it; *it* was only for Lionel—father wrote—what

did he write exactly?' appealing to her brother, who stood silently by.

'Oh, you can remember.' He could not bring himself to play the part of narrator.

She glanced at him.

'You don't mind, Lionel?'

'No; I think they ought to know.'

'Our mother was alive, you know,' said Bet, quickly; 'and she was not—not'—the brows of all overshadowed; Elizabeth Colvin's name was never willingly mentioned by her children—'Lionel was to keep the papers *to himself*,' proceeded the speaker, with choking utterance; 'and—our dear father implored him—oh, Lionel, I can't say it!' the tears bursting from her downcast lids.

'Not to make such an unhappy marriage as he had done,' said Lionel. "'As one man to another," my father wrote, he conjured me to "avoid the fatal mistake of marrying a woman without religion." It was "the one, the only sure safeguard." "I have learned this too late," my poor father wrote. "God give you a happier destiny." And just below this,' continued Lionel, after a momentary hesitation, 'there was this (it was written so badly that I could hardly make it out, still, I think—I am almost sure—the next words were these, and they are underlined): "*You will see what Blanche was, and what she might have been to me.*"'

There was a long silence.

'Did you see?' said Georgie, at last, looking at him.

He made a motion of assent.

'How, then, did you not think of her—of Lady Blanche?'

'The name was not "Massitur." The letters must have been written in her unmarried days. There are twelve of them; and some scraps of pencil drawings and a bunch of flowers. There was a slip of paper inside, in our father's writing. It says: "All over. July 31st, 1869."'

'All those years ago!' It was Georgie who, less impressed than her elders, as was perhaps natural, found breath to ejaculate the above. Poll looked at her sister as if she had committed an indiscretion. Poll was waiting to see what the others would say.

'I showed Bet the letters,' continued Lionel; 'I thought father would want me to' (Bet had looked such a poor, forlorn, desolate little girl, that an impulse of compassion had led him

to take her into his confidence). 'And we read them together, and made out that there had been an engagement, but that it had been broken off, and that father had not been thought good enough. We had only her letters, so of course we didn't know what he wrote, but we could guess. He must have loved her. I think we know how he *could* love. He did not marry for several years. That's about all.'

'It must be she, Lionel.' Bet was breathing unevenly, but her tears had stopped.

'I think so. Yes.'

'She said over and over how like we were. She asked about you; and when we said you were not talkative like us, she smiled and murmured: "So like his father!"—and looked as if she could have said a great deal more.'

'I saw her hunting round the room, too,' chimed in Georgie, who saw at last a hope of being listened to and not frowned at. 'She took up several of the photographs and put them down again. She must have been looking for father's.'

'Sh—don't speak like that,' for the tone was too brisk; 'besides, you don't *know* that she was,' continued Bet. 'People often look round for photographs.'

'She found nothing she cared for. If I had guessed, I would have put the miniature in her way.'

A faded morocco case containing a miniature painting of Colonel Colvin in the days when he was a smiling young lieutenant, proud of his uniform and his moustache, lay with closed doors on a corner table. All Bet's treasures were on that table; she had but few.

Ere she went to bed that night she opened the case, and looked inside. For the moment another face, not often absent from her thoughts, was forgotten.

(To be continued.)



## *The Proof-sheets of 'Redgauntlet.'*

TO look over the work of a famous writer before it has received the finishing touches with which it goes forth to the Great Public and to Posterity is a privilege seldom enjoyed but by the publisher, the printer, and their satellites. It is indeed a question whether these worthies regard their exceptional position as carrying any privilege with it. For the great writer may not be truly *arrivé* until after his books have all been written; and, in any case, the revision and correction of proofs is scarcely a pleasure that dazzles the reviser. But when the writer is one whose name has shone with constant and undimmed brilliancy for a whole century, when seventy-five years have elapsed since the book in question appeared in its final form, when the name of its author is *Sir Walter Scott*, then there can be no doubt as to the interest with which every reader of English must scan the imperfect proof-sheets and note how here a word or a line was struck out, and there a fresh sentence or it may be a paragraph was added, embodying some new idea that had cropped up in the course of revision. This, then, is a pleasure which may be enjoyed in the case of two, at least, of the Waverley Novels—*The Pirate* and *Redgauntlet*.

The proof-sheets of *The Pirate*, in the original three-volume form, with Sir Walter's corrections and alterations, recently passed from the collection of Lord Orford into the hands of the late Mr. Bernard Quaritch, who announced them for sale at the price of one hundred guineas. And as the present article deals with the *Redgauntlet* proofs, at the same stage of their progress, a certain amount of interest will be found to attach to the following explanatory note which appeared in Mr. Quaritch's 'Rough List, No. 152,' relative to this unique copy of *The Pirate*:—

Not merely interesting as a Scott relic, but extremely valuable and important as furnishing a striking example of his literary methods, and



of his practice in regard to style. It is curious to note how the text gains in strength and clearness by slight touches of the pen. We frequently observe the words 'Please read this,' evidently in Ballantyne's hand after his own first reading; and they generally appear in places where the ideas are obscurely expressed. In some places Ballantyne's memoranda amount to objections and desires for large alteration; and they are answered by Scott in subsidiary notes. There is one instance in which the author humorously writes, 'Your first objection is all my eye; your second is in my eye.'

It is believed that Scott's corrections never reached the printer directly; that they were copied by Ballantyne upon second proofs and forwarded for press in his handwriting. Consequently the proof sheets read by the author were intended to be destroyed; and the preservation of those of *The Pirate* is a singular circumstance due to the action of Robert Cadell.

The above remarks are generally applicable to the *Redgauntlet* proofs. Ballantyne's 'Please to read this,' however, occurring as it does at the head of every sixteenth page, shows that it was nothing more than a formal reminder to the author. But his criticisms—good, bad, and indifferent—are scattered broadcast over the volumes; and they take effect upon Scott, sometimes in the shape of a marginal reply, sometimes in a rectification of the text. It need only be added, with reference to the proof-sheets of *The Pirate*, that their preservation is not actually a 'singular' circumstance, since those of *Redgauntlet* also exist. And it is far from unlikely that, although intended to be destroyed, the revised proofs of others of the series escaped destruction.

The *Redgauntlet* proof-sheets have been in the possession of the present writer for a number of years, and their previous history is quite clear. In 1891 they were submitted to Mr. Andrew Lang in connection with his Introductory Essay to the 'Border' edition of the novel, and in that essay Mr. Lang has incorporated some of the most important points suggested to him by the proof-sheets. Before referring to any other details that are worthy of consideration, it will therefore be convenient to cite Mr. Lang's instructive remarks, which are to this effect:—

The proof-sheets of *Redgauntlet* exist, and show some noteworthy points, as we see James Ballantyne's suggestions, Scott's corrections, and an occasional aside to Ballantyne. It is curious that the opening misquotation from Horace, *Cur me exanimas querelis tuis* (for *cur me querelis exanimas tuis*) has been left uncorrected. James clearly was

ignorant of Latin, and, when he draws attention later to a Latin passage, Scott not unnaturally asks why, in such a printing establishment, there is nobody who can read a few lines of the language of Rome. James objects to the mixture of 'Thou' and 'You' in Fairford's letter (ii), but Scott does not make any change. The whole allusion to the Fairfords' possible descent, on the wrong side, from 'Fairford of that ilk,' is an afterthought, added on the margin of the proof. Herries was originally 'of Dryfesdale,' not 'of Birrenswork.' A marginal addition is old Mr. Fairford's rebuke to Darsie for growing merrier instead of graver with the increase of his income. This characteristic 'brocard' may have been a reminiscence. By far the greater number of additions are made on the margin of that perfect masterpiece, 'Wandering Willie's Tale.' 'The finest finger for the back lilt' is an addition, so is the rumour that Redgauntlet feared the vengeance of the Whigs. So is 'you maun ken he had a way of bending his brows that men saw the visible mark of a horseshoe on his forehead, deep dinted as if it had been stamped there.' But probably the horseshoe was already part of the conception of the story. . . . The insertion of Bloody Mackenyie in Hell is a marginal addition, so is Steenie's waking in the parish kirkyard—a romantic thought. . . . Most of the costume of the gay fishwife at the dance is an afterthought. James Ballantyne rather timidly suggests that Green Mantle at the fishers' dance reminds him of Di Vernon, so Scott slightly modifies her cavalier tone. James is scandalised at the mention of young advocates as 'boys.' Scott writes, 'Aye, aye!' Where the old judge speaks of 'the auld b——,' Ballantyne entreats that 'b——h' may be substituted. 'I think delicacy itself requires b——h.' James was very strong on delicacy. The relentless Scott, therefore, to the primitive 'b' adds 'itch.' Ballantyne makes a more useful suggestion, which Scott accepts, when Alan reads the wrong letter in the trial. When one of the characters promises to another 'a day's work in harvest,' the sensitive James asks, 'Is not this a trifle—vulgar?' But he allows *cave ne Bellephontes literas adferres* to stand uncorrected. When Scott writes, 'He might have made a pendant to my friend Wilkie's inimitable blind Crowder,' Ballantyne asks, 'What does a "pendant" mean?' To have a corrector whose ignorance fairly represents that of many readers was doubtless useful to Scott. Ballantyne fulfilled the duties of Molière's legendary old housekeeper.

One detail overlooked by Mr. Lang is that Scott did not refer to Steenie Steenson as having 'the finest finger for the back lilt,' but for the 'back-lill.' There is no doubt about this, for the marginal addition is written with unusual clearness, and, moreover, it was so printed in the first edition of the novel. Indeed, Dr. Jamieson, in his *Scottish Dictionary*, quotes that very

passage as one of the examples of the use of 'lill.' There seems to have been a good deal of confusion between 'lill' and 'lilt' for a very long time, as far back as the *Book of the Howlat*, wherein there is mention of the 'lilt-pype.' Possibly this confusion is due to the printers. At any rate, it is beyond question that the 'lill-pipe' was the bag-pipe, and that both that name and the companion 'doudle-sack' (whence the adjective 'sack-doudling' in 'Wandering Willie's Tale') are derived from the same source as the Dutch *lullepijp* and *doedelzak*. It would be out of place here to enter further into the complications of 'lill' and 'lilt,' but as it is certain that Scott used the first of these forms in the passage referred to, the spelling 'lilt' ought to disappear from all future editions of *Redgauntlet*.

The space at Mr. Lang's disposal as editor of the 'Border' edition did not allow of his giving anything like a detailed account of these proof-sheets, to do which would have been to accord them an undue importance in the essay. Consequently, although he has noted most of the salient features, there are still many other items worthy of remark.

For example, in addition to the alteration of 'Dryfesdale' into 'Birrenswork,' we find that Alan Fairford was originally Alan Fairburn, though the change into Fairford takes place as early as the second *Letter*. Then, again, Nanty Ewart figures at first as Nanty Ewald. The reason of his transformation is explainable thus. Readers of the novel will remember that the skipper of the *Jumping Jenny*, finding his passenger acting as emissary between one desperate Jacobite and another, naturally concluded that Alan was himself aware that Prince Charles Edward had been brought over from France, though perhaps ignorant of the fact that he had come in that self-same brig. And Ewart, feeling his way with his present passenger, whose supposed excess of caution puzzled him greatly, makes the cryptic observation: 'What the devil should I gain by passing so poor a card as you are? Have I not had ace of trumps in my hand, and did I not play it fairly? Ay, I say the *Jumping Jenny* can run in other ware as well as kegs. Put *sigma* and *tau* to Ewart, and see how that will spell—d'ye take me now?' Considering that Alan was a clever young advocate, who must surely have known that the Jacobite plotters were still at work, his reply argues a somewhat inexplicable denseness: "No, indeed," said Fairford; "I am utterly ignorant of what you allude to." But the point is that Scott had seen his way to utilise the skipper's name if altered to Ewart; and Ewart it then

and there became. Scott had really made the change in an earlier proof, because here is the whole sentence in type. But the author, the printer, and Ballantyne were playing at cross-purposes in several of the preceding pages; for in some places the printed 'Ewald' has its two last letters deleted, and a marginal 'rt' in Scott's writing; and then again we have 'Ewart' printed correctly, subsequently altered by Ballantyne with a marginal 'ld,' and this alteration in its turn struck out by the author, with an added '*stet*' to make all right. The question is at length definitely settled at the foot of one page, where Ballantyne, after transforming a printed 'Ewart' into 'Ewald,' writes: 'I fancy the name is Ewald, as it began with that?' To which Scott conclusively replies, 'Ewart is finally adopted.'

Before leaving the passage between Nanty and Alan, quoted above, it may be added that one sentence of the skipper's originally ran thus: 'Ay, I say the *Jumping Jenny* can run in kings as well as kegs.' Scott has struck out 'kings' and substituted 'other ware,' realising that Alan could not otherwise have failed to understand the '*sigma* and *tau*' allusion—for the whole page, with that exception, stood as it stands now.

Another surname that has undergone mutation at this place is that of the old smuggler, hypocrite, and trader of Annan. Sometimes it is 'Trumbull,' but oftener 'Turnbull'; and Ballantyne feels himself impelled to query, 'Is it Trumbull or Turnbull? It is here spelt both ways.' Whereupon Scott writes bluntly, 'Trümbull'; no doubt deciding upon that form because it expresses the Border pronunciation of 'Turnbull,' even at the present day. Or, what is more probable, it may have never been anything *but* 'Trumbull' in the original manuscript. Then, again, the disguised Prince at Fairladies is at first styled 'Father Jerome,' but this is quickly altered to 'Father Buonaventure.' A curious instance of forgetfulness is shown in the name of Darsie's sister. She appears as 'Lilias' at the dance at Brokenburn, but when, in the third volume, old Redgauntlet introduces her to Darsie, it is by the name of 'Annabel.' Annabel she continues to be for several pages, until it occurs to Ballantyne to ask: 'By the bye, how came he [Darsie] to know her name at all?' Scott appropriately replies: 'Redgauntlet introduced her, p. 103'; and then he adds: 'See also Vol. I., p. 289.' It must have been in turning to this latter reference that Scott realised that 'Lilias' was her original name, and thereafter he alters 'Annabel' to 'Lilias'—a distinct improvement.

Mr. Lang justly says of Ballantyne, 'His remarks on the proof-sheets of *Redgauntlet* are inept;' and it is likely that they tried Scott's good-nature a little. As an illustration, let us take a passage from the after-dinner scene at Dumfries:—

'I will leave you to yourselves, gentlemen,' said the Provost, rising; 'when you have done with your crack, you will find me at my wife's tea-table.'

'And a more accomplished old woman never drank cat-lap,' said Maxwell, as he shut the door; 'the last word has him, speak it who will.'

Ballantyne here thinks it necessary to air his own impressions. 'This is equivocal,' he asserts. 'I understood the compliment at first to apply to the *female* old woman.' Then he goes on to say: 'I am struck with a great change in Maxwell's language. On his first introduction he talks broad Scotch, and now pure English.' To all which Scott disdains to give any reply.

A few pages later the ever-watchful Ballantyne interferes to as little purpose. The text runs as follows:—

Laying all these matters together, Alan thought, with no little anxiety, on the celebrated lines of Shakespeare,

'A drop,  
That in the ocean seeks another drop,' &c.

'To render the quotation clear, it should be lengthened, I think,' says Ballantyne; adding: 'But I forget where it occurs.' 'So do I,' returns Scott; 'but you can look it out in Ayscough, which I have not. I mean Ayscough's Index to Shakespeare. I wish you——' But what Scott wished is for ever lost, through the incredible stupidity of the Edinburgh bookseller, a Princes Street bookseller, to whom the work of binding these sheets in book-form was entrusted ten years ago, and who displayed his qualifications for this honourable task by clipping down the margins to suit the size of the boards, quite regardless of any consideration for the marginal glosses in the well-known handwriting of Sir Walter Scott.

In the published novel the brief Shakespearean quotation remains exactly as it stood in the proof, which shows how much value Scott placed on the annotator's judgment. Indeed, he must have been a trial, this same annotator. The earlier portion of the novel, it is hardly necessary to observe, is thrown into the form of a series of letters between the two friends and twin-heroes

of the story, and of these letters the sixth was thus headed: 'Letter VI. Darsie Latimer to Alan Fairford. [In continuation of Letters III. and IV.]' As the fifth letter had been from Fairford to Latimer, this reminder was not unreasonable. Yet Ballantyne must needs volunteer the opinion: 'I think the reference may be easily made without this intimation.' 'Perhaps so—yet precision is not improper,' is Scott's reply; and the heading remains intact. Then, again, he has a question to ask regarding the name 'Birrenswork,' which comes strangely from a native of the south of Scotland, where that is an actual place-name. Referring to one page where it appears as 'Birvenswork,' he remarks: 'This title has already past through various sheets as Birvenswork, though afterwards, I observe, corrected by the author to Birrenswork. Shall these pages be cancelled, or shall the word remain and be continued, Birvenswork?' Scott's brief reply, unfortunately mutilated, states that the word should be spelt 'with an R,' and indeed the reviser ought to have known that the erroneous spelling was simply due to a mis-reading of the author's writing. Mr. Lang, in pointing out that the line from Horace which begins the novel has been wrongly quoted by Scott, observes: 'Lockhart describes James Ballantyne as neglecting his business for the correction of Scott's proof-sheets. It is much to be regretted that Lockhart himself did not play the part of corrector. Ballantyne had an eye for apparent contradictions in the narrative, but neither for slips in quotation nor for Scotticisms in style.' On one occasion, indeed, Ballantyne's love of discovering blemishes leads him into an actual impertinence. This is when Fairford, on leaving Fairladies, 'often looked back to the melancholy and neglected dwelling in which he had witnessed such strange scenes.' 'The scenes were not particularly strange, I think,' observes the reviser in the margin; but the author neither takes the trouble to make any alteration nor to take notice of the remark.

It must not be supposed, however, that Scott never listened to his 'reader's' suggestions, or that these were invariably pointless and absurd. Thus, after Darsie had spent his first night at Brokenburn, the action of his mysterious host on the following morning was at first described in these words: 'He walked up and down while I partook of the bread and milk; and the slow, measured weighty step again reminded me of those which I had heard last night.' 'This is written,' says Ballantyne, 'as if there were some doubt about whose were the steps. *Was* there any?'



To this Scott answers, 'He only tells you what he heard and saw.' Nevertheless, he puts his pen through the obnoxious words 'again reminded me of,' and substitutes for them 'seemed identified with'; and this became the permanent form. There can be no doubt that this emendation was an improvement. Further, in picturing the neighbouring cottages on the same occasion, the text originally ran: 'Two or three miserable huts could be seen beside the little haven, inhabited probably by the owners of the boats, but inferior in every respect to the establishment of "The Laird," as I had heard mine host termed, though that was miserable enough.' Ballantyne puts a cross against "'The Laird," as I had heard mine host termed,' and remarks below, 'I don't think he did; or else he would never have thought of offering him money.' The criticism is pertinent, and Scott has abbreviated the clause to 'the establishment of mine host.' A few pages later, in the wordy encounter between Joshua Geddes and the Laird on the subject of fishing in the Solway, the Quaker is made to say: 'Thou killest the fish with spear, line, and coble-net; and we with snares and with nets, cunningly wrought, which work by the ebb and the flow of the tide.' Here, again, is something that sticks in Ballantyne's gizzard. 'Would an actual Quaker think it needful to describe the nets as "cunningly wrought"?' he asks. This is really hypercritical; but Scott meekly obeys his instructor, and 'cunningly wrought' disappears for ever from the pages of *Redgauntlet*.

Mount Sharon furnishes us with two other instances of successful protest by Ballantyne. One passage in the original text, occurring in the account of Darsie's tour of the grounds under the guidance of Rachel Geddes, ran thus:

'I am not quite of her mind, Alan. I do not believe either pigs or poultry would admit that the chief end of their being was to be killed and eaten. However, I did not press the argument, from which my Quakeress seemed rather desirous to escape; for, conducting me to the greenhouse, which was extensive, and filled with the choicest plants, she pointed out an aviary which occupied the farther end, where, she said, she occupied herself with attending the inhabitants, without being disturbed with any painful recollections concerning their future state.

"But you deprive them of liberty," said I; and perhaps might have tried to add something smart or gallant, had she not answered instantly, with her characteristic simplicity:

"All good, friend Latimer, must be purchased at the expense of



some evil. Thou art, it seems, a lawyer, and should know that, by the laws, men are restrained of a part of their liberty that they may enjoy the rest in security. These birds have their wants supplied and their security cared for. Believe me, many a vagrant human being, left to range for the means of existence on the Common of Life, who are left by their very liberty a prey to the vices of others, and, what is worse, to their own."

Opposite the last sentence Ballantyne has written 'Incompleat'; and there is no doubt that Scott's hasty composition is here seen at its worst. But his critic has yet another fault to find, and this applies to the whole paragraph. 'Honestly,' he says, 'I do not think the good Quakeress shews much'—and here the scissors of the Bæotian bookbinder already referred to effectually prevent us from learning the exact nature of the objection. But whatever the motive that actuated him, Scott's pen has been drawn criss-cross through Rachel's little speech and the sentence which precedes it, and they now exist nowhere but in this one proof-sheet. The paragraph first quoted has, moreover, been slightly modified, 'Quakeress' having become 'Quaker,' and 'employed' having been substituted for the second 'occupied,' a repetition to which Scott's attention was very properly drawn by his zealous 'reader.'

Ballantyne's second triumph is witnessed two pages later. Darsie is holding forth to Alan on the subject of the best way of laying out a garden and ornamental grounds, and he says:

'... I would not deface a scene of natural grandeur or beauty by the introduction of crowded artificial decorations, yet such may, I think, be very interesting, where the situation otherwise has no particular beauties. In spite of... I will always remain of opinion that, in the neighbourhood of a mansion-house (itself an artificial object), such decorations as terraces, alleys, fountains, and so forth, where vegetable and architectural ornaments are blended together, add dignity and interest to the whole, connect the regions of art and of nature, and prepare for gliding from the regions where the former presides, into the wide extended domains of the latter.'

'This is almost a repetition, even in terms,' complains the carping Ballantyne, placing marginal crosses against the second sentence, 'of what is said in the Introduction to *Quentin Durward*'; and certainly the description recalls the Chateau de Hautlieu. The objection might not have had force with such

readers as happened to see the resemblance, but the mere idea of echoing his own words proved sufficient to cause the author to delete the whole sentence.

'James was very strong on delicacy,' observes Mr. Lang, after a quaint illustration of that fact. Yet the same reprehensible initial 'b' is allowed to pass unchallenged when it is applied by Maxwell of Summertrees, with considerable temper and yet not inappropriately, to the 'person' in concealment at Fairladies. It was probably owing to Ballantyne's influence, however, that 'brimstone' was ultimately substituted (see p. 293 of the 'Border' edition, Vol. II.); but that Pate-in-Peril really used the first word no reasonable man can doubt. The trail of the Ballantyne is once more visible in a trifling alteration in the dialogue between Darsie and the rustic servant-wench in Cumberland, which, in the first edition, went thus:

"Ah!" said I; "and I suppose your sweetheart John carries it [the mail-bag]?"

"Noa—disn't now—and Jan is no sweetheart of mine, ever since he danced at his mother's feast with Kitty Rutlege, and let me sit still; that a did."

"It was most abominable in Jan, and what I could never have thought of him," I replied.

"O, but a did though—a let me sit still on my——"

"Well, well, my pretty May, you will get a handsomer fellow than Jan—Jan's not the fellow for you, I see that."

"Noa, noa," answered the damsel; "but he is weel aneugh for a' that, mon."

One other little item in this felicitous dialogue is that the Cumbrian Audrey originally placed St. Bees 'twenty, or forty, or I dunna know not how many miles to the East—in Northumberland'; whereas the final form is '. . . how many miles from this part, to the West, on the coast-side.' Scott may have intended the girl to be so ignorant as not to know the whereabouts of St. Bees; but an error in orientation is a most unlikely defect in a rustic. More probably Scott himself was at fault. At any rate, the first edition of *Redgauntlet* appeared with St. Bees in Northumberland.

Over and above the special instances cited, Scott was indebted to Ballantyne for pointing out that this or that sentence was 'Incompleat,' or 'Incorrect,' and the necessary correction was always made by the author, who was not too proud to take advice. Both author and reader, however, have passed one curious error.

In Chapter XIII. of the 'Narrative,' the Annan publican is made to assert that 'Nanty Ewald [Ewart] could steer through the Pentland Firth though he were as drunk as the Baltick Ocean.' Now, the actual expression, still current in circles where force is preferred to elegance, is 'as fou's the Baltic.' The Baltic Ocean is never drunk, although it is very full; and the figure loses alike its humour and its meaning when one says 'as *drunk* as the Baltic.' This was no casual slip on Scott's part; for we find again, in *Peveril of the Peak* (Chapter XXVII.), that Chiffinch instructs his servant to overtake Lord Saville's groom and to 'fill him as drunk as the Baltic Sea.' It is quite evident that he had missed the point of the expression.

As a pendant to Ballantyne's query, 'What does a "pendant" mean?' is his marginal question on the subject of the 'monument standing on yonder plain, near a hamlet,' pointed out by the elder Redgauntlet to his nephew. 'Is there (for I do not know, and am curious), is there such a monument?' asks Ballantyne. 'Yes, at Brough upon Sands,' replies the amiable author; and he thereupon prefixes to Redgauntlet's next sentence the words: 'The hamlet is Burgh<sup>1</sup>-upon-Sands,' in case other readers might need the explanation.

In looking over these proof-sheets we have been, as it were, looking over the shoulder of Sir Walter Scott as he sat at work; and, in the words of Mr. Quaritch's note, we have seen something 'of his literary methods, and of his practice in regard to style.' The impression one receives therefrom is that, as he himself was always ready to admit, he troubled himself very little either as to method or to style—in his prose writings, at any rate. Mr. Lang has referred <sup>2</sup> to the late R. L. Stevenson's 'rather severe judgment on Scott's indolence, on his lack of care about selection, and compression, and arrangement.' But all these were matters that Scott held in somewhat light esteem. In such things he was the very opposite of Mr. Stevenson, who has told us how, in his youth, he deliberately made himself the 'sedulous ape' of earlier writers, jotting down in his pocket note-book every word or phrase of theirs that he thought would aid him in acquiring an effective style. Scott was built on quite another plan from that. He was nobody's 'ape'; but a great, original genius—and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. If, as his hurrying

<sup>1</sup> It may be pointed out, for the benefit of those who are curious in matters of spelling, that Scott writes 'Brough' on one page and immediately afterwards 'Burgh' on the other.

<sup>2</sup> LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, Feb. 1895, p. 433.

thoughts found utterance, they took shape in a somewhat inchoate form, that was a defect that he endeavoured to remedy afterwards, after a fashion. But of the self-consciousness of the stylist he had little or nothing. One of the great charms of Scott, as a man and as a writer, is that he is so natural. Matter, not manner, was his chief thought, and he tells his stories in the novels with as little regard to 'art' as when he was similarly amusing his comrades at Edinburgh High School. So reckless was he in this respect, that he actually allowed such an 'incomplete' sentence as that in Rachel Geddes's speech (afterwards deleted) to pass into print; and that instance does not stand alone. It is true that the proof-sheets show many marginal embellishments to 'Wandering Willie's Tale'; but these are almost without exception *additions*—after-thoughts that occurred to him as he read the printed page. The 'Tale' itself runs on, easy, fluent, and strong as when his flying pen wrote down the quick-coming words in which it first took visible form; and scarcely a single printed word has required amendment. So, too, in Pate-in-Peril's story of his escape from the dragoons; and so also in the fine scene where the broken Prince bids farewell to his 'unfriendly friends,' and to the reader. In these two passages, and more especially in the latter, there is almost no alteration or correction whatever, and they are among the best in the book.

What we learn, then, from the *Redgauntlet* proofs is that Scott's 'literary methods and style' hardly gave him a moment's thought. And if here and there there are tokens of recklessness and haste in composition, these only throw into greater prominence the fact that the finest passages had received no closer attention, but were also the unstudied, spontaneous utterances of one who was by right of birth a prince among the writers of romance.

DAVID MACRITCHIE.

## *Stray Notes on Colour in Relation to Temperature.*

'FERRY, yo ho!' with a long-drawn accent on the last syllable of 'Ferree' that makes the sound travel across the water. That's a golfer who wants his lunch, and by the same token I ought to want mine too, but when I spend much time out of doors the fresh air feeds me.

I have been watching the river and all that belongs to it for the last two hours, and by the help of palette and sketch-box I have been making notes of an old black barge that has seen its last days of service on the water and now lies wearily on the sand, like some old sea monster tired of its life. When I began my notes the barge was high and dry, the delicately coloured sand lay in golden heaps around it on the sunny side, and a great cool shadow rested like silence on the leeward of the boat. The sand was everywhere, but for one little pool shaped like a half-moon, and this had been left by a former tide, for the sky to look down into, for a stray shore crab to bathe in, and for me to make note of.

I had put the barge into my sketch, a blue-black note, I had touched it round with the sands, pale gold against black, I had thought of introducing the mill that stands across the water, with the white walls of the coastguards' cottage close at hand, when there came a very light sound like a little laugh, something between a laugh and a whisper, and there was the incoming tide blotting out my golden sand and racing round my barge—*my* barge, I had begun to know it and be attached to it—and there was the hulk, that looked so solid and immovable, being slowly lifted up by the tide; the purple shadow in the sand was gone, and a greyish-yellow wash of water played about where the shadow had been, and my poor notes were in disorder.

Hang the tide!

'Ferreé!'

By all means. I'll shut up my box and join the hungry golfer in his quest for lunch.

There is a little group of people waiting for the ferry-boat on the sloping shelf of a stone path. Two middle-aged golfers in tweed suits, two ladies also middle-aged and spectacled, one youth with a fowling-piece, an old muzzle-loader. As the ferryman creeps near us with his boat, the middle-aged ladies interview the gunner, who in addition to his gun carries a dead bird which he has just shot above the golf links near the sea. The bird is a little ringed plover. Its leg is broken and its white breast is stained with blood. I heard a couple of shots fired when I was making my sketch.

Now I know their meaning. The young gunner is a little proud of his bag. He has achieved something this fine autumn morning in having brought down this poor little harmless wanderer of the sands and marshes. He has 'shot a fine shoot.' Well, but this incident of the ringed plover leads me to a subject which has given me some weeks of thought. Let us consider the bird for a moment. He has a black head with brown upper wings and back, but his neck, breast, and under parts are snowy white, with one dark band beneath his throat. Why has Nature made this arrangement in black and white? What is the meaning of the white breast and white underwings? Is the white to give the gunner a better aim? No; that would be too unkind. Is it there for the bird to use as a signal for his mate, to warn him against danger by sea or land?

Perhaps. Or may the white be a protection from cold and damp? The white can be used as a danger signal or a call to the bird's fellows, but I am much disposed to think that it can be looked upon as a protection against cold.

But why? Have we not always thought that white was associated with the comfort of coolness? A white waistcoat, a white shirt, to the sufferer from summer heat: are not these the justly quoted and appropriate accessories? And are not dark clothes winter comforts for humanity? We all have cherished these beliefs for many years, and we may cherish them still without hurting anybody's feelings greatly, for there seems a sense of fitness in the white waistcoat for summer wear, and in the dark-dyed woollen coat for winter. But here creeps in the doubt. Why is it that the dwellers in the North Pole, such as birds, foxes, bears, wear white clothes? Is the heat so oppressive in

the Arctic regions that Nature supplies most of them with white waistcoats, and many of them with white overalls?

The eager scientist whispers in my ear, 'Why, don't you know that it is for protection against their enemies, so that the colour of their coats shall match their surroundings?'

Admitted that this is the case; but pray from whom does the polar bear seek to hide himself? Does he fear the fox, or seal, or bird of prey even? I think not, therefore we must not allow this argument to hold good in his case. Coming back to the plover's white breast, I have noted that nearly all the waders, and all the birds that migrate to the colder parts of the globe, have a covering of white, 'mystic wonderful,' not always on the back and upper wings, but invariably on the chest and abdomen. Take the gulls and the terns: they are dressed in white, with a touch of black on the wings, and a tender note of grey. The penguins have white on the breast and abdomen, though the back is dark.

Our wood-birds, our songsters, are dressed in brown, grey, or green. Take the pheasants, who are true perchers; they have no white on the breast, just a touch of white sometimes about the neck, showing a hybrid strain. Take the partridge, our fixed resident; he has no white about him, nor yet the grouse; but go farther north, and then the ptarmigan, whose home is in the snow, he changes with the changing season, and shows a white breast to the cold north sky. Note that even the rabbit and the hare in this country have white underclothing; they want warmth to protect themselves against the cold, damp ground.

Is not this the meaning of the colour white as a protection against cold?

But someone may object, 'Can you prove that white is warm?'

Partly, by analogy.

First of all, white hair is hair devoid of pigment. In the hair-shaft bubbles of air have taken the place of pigment. The air once warmed by the animal's body allows less heat to be conducted away and so lost for protection. As in the matter of clothes, they do not warm the body, but it is the body which generates the heat that warms the clothes; they simply prevent too rapid loss of heat by being bad conductors.

This puts me in mind of the sketch in *Punch* where a gentleman complains to the waiter that he has brought him his chop on



a cold plate. The waiter's reply is apt and almost scientific: 'Oh, never mind, sir, the chop 'll warm up the plate nicely!'

And furthermore, some of the birds that migrate north have a warmer coloured summer plumage which changes to white when the winter sets in. Surely if the plumage of darker hue possessed a greater heat-giving capacity, then Nature would clothe her feathered children of the north in dark dress.

On the other hand, if we take the trouble to look carefully at the plumage of those birds who live in warm climates, we shall find that white is a rare colour, and that black, brown, dark-green, dark-blue, with touches of brilliant emerald-green, red, and yellow are more usually met with. I have found white amongst the humming-birds, but these little marvels clothe themselves with the rainbow as a rule; they put on white to give themselves more of a *distingué* air, I suppose.

There are some exceptions to these colours of warm climate birds: for instance, we have the flamingoes, 'with wings of gentle flush on delicate white,' the bell-bird of America, the storks which migrate from Holland to South Africa for the winter. And there are also a few exceptions of birds who live in or migrate to the Arctic zone having dark plumage.

The northern diver is black with small white markings, but he has a distinct winter and summer dress; there is a black duck who breeds in the Arctic zone, and the Scoter is black all over.

At any rate, a visit to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington would guide the inquirer on this subject, and might possibly do much to confirm my opinion as to white plumage being a protection to birds against cold.

Now I have been gradually led to think about the colour white in its relation to warmth by having noticed many years ago that roses had different temperatures according to their colour. It was somewhat in this way. I was dining at a friend's house; it was in summer; on the table in front of each guest had been thoughtfully placed a single rose in a glass. The evening was warm, and a curious instinct led me, I suppose, to smell something that looked cool and should be fragrant. I took up my own special rose for this purpose. It was fragrant, it was cool; like a well-advertised cocoa, it was 'grateful,' it was 'comforting.' I asked my neighbour on my left hand to let me smell her rose. Whether this request was made in the sacred interests of science or for mere curiosity's sake I cannot rightly tell, but 'This flower is warm,' said I to my fair neighbour. She replied, 'The warmth

of the room would account for that.' I thought differently. If the warmth of the room could affect one rose it should naturally affect another within a few inches distance from it. The short discussion ended in a kind of game of floral family coach, where all the roses changed places and all were tested by smell; but this is not one of the accessories of the game, I believe, and it also ended in a general consensus of opinion as to tea roses having a different temperature from the red roses. My rose was a tea rose, a Gloire de Dijon, my neighbour's rose was a Duke of Edinburgh, a red rose. The rest of the guests had tea roses placed before them, represented by Gloire de Dijon, Maréchal Niel, and the honoured blooms of Xavier-Olibo, the Duke of Edinburgh, Cheshunt—hybrid glowed in varying tones of red.

But it was not till some months after this colour tournament that I noticed that white roses were apparently warm to the nostrils—at least they did not give the sensation of coldness. Time went on. I was asked to give a lecture on the subject of the scent of flowers before the Mid-Kent Scientific and Philosophical Society; the subject of the temperature of flowers was to have been discussed, but the lecture was never given. The scientific side of the question somewhat alarmed me, and I waited a few more years before science, in the person of Professor Babington, of Cambridge, made me feel that after all I was on safe ground. Whilst on a visit to some friends at Cambridge I had occasion to call on Mrs. Babington; it was my good fortune to see her distinguished husband. It is needless to say that I buttonholed the Professor on my temperature of flowers theory. He demurred as to the scent of flowers giving a sensation of coldness or warmth, for he knew that individuals differed so much in their sense of smell. I explained that the scent of the flowers had not everything to do with the sensation of coldness or warmth, but that if the cheek of an observer were touched with the petals of various flowers, the surface nerves would convey the impression of coldness or warmth to the observer's brain, and he would be able to distinguish the touch of a tea rose from that of a red rose blindfold.

The Professor smiled on me kindly, but shook his head sceptically. On the following day, however, he changed his mind, when I brought him a bunch of different coloured chrysanthemums, and asked him to touch his cheek with a red one first and then a yellow one, and to tell me whether he could distinguish any marked difference of temperature between them. He did so, and after a few

cheek touchings by way of test came joyfully over to my opinion. As Professor of Botany he must have made numerous observations on flowers, but this at least was new to him.

Having noted the temperature of many flowers against my cheek since then, I have come to the conclusion that dark reds and browns give the sensation of the greatest warmth; that lemon-yellow is the coldest colour, that delicate pink holds a middle place between dark-red and white, and that white is distinctly warmer than violet, blue, or yellow, and therefore that white is a warm colour.

After having made a series of tests with flowers, I made some also with fruit, and being guided by the impression that yellow was a cold colour and that dark brown was warm, I found that green grapes and greenish yellow grapes were colder than dark ones, and that green and yellow gooseberries were colder than dark gooseberries. We may note by the way that some kinds of dark gooseberries have a skin that is rough with hairs; this condition, which is found in the chrysanthemum leaf, favours warmth. It may be pure fancy on my part, but I think a lemon has a colder surface than an orange or a dark grape. A strawberry, though it contains a good quantity of water in its fragrant pulp, does not, to my sense, feel so cold to the touch as a grape or lemon. Is this possibly due to the red colour of the strawberry and to the seeds and hair-like processes with which it is provided? It may be so. On the other hand, the banana with its yellow skin, and also its green skin, is distinctly cold to the touch, though the fruit itself contains but little water, the moisture and pigment being deposited chiefly in the skin.

Can we fairly assume that where Nature has placed a good supply of yellow pigment cells in fruit or flower, there also has she stored water in abundance close at hand? Is not a yellow-skinned melon one of the coolest fruits that can be touched? It is brimful of water and its pigment cells are charged with yellow.

Whilst making my tests on the temperature of flowers, I have found that the petals of a flower appear to be of a different temperature from that of the leaves and stem. In the case of the chrysanthemum the leaf is warmer to the touch than the petal; in the case of plants that grow in damp, marshy ground, the stem and leaf are colder than the flower petal. I have also noted that, to make the tests carefully, freshly cut flowers should be used, or they should be touched when growing on the plant or tree, for this reason: the fresh-cut flowers hold moisture in their

leaves and petals, but if the same flowers are allowed to wither and get dry, the leaves and petals take the temperature of their surroundings. I conclude, therefore, that those petals which are coldest to the touch contain most water, and it will be found that the leaves of plants which have a rough or hairy surface are warmer than the petals of the same plant. Another point of interest lies in the fact that the fresh growing plant will answer to the test in a warm room or conservatory indoors, or in the cold air of the garden out of doors. I come, therefore, to the conclusion that in the case of fruit and flowers, radiation and absorption of heat is governed largely by the water supply present in the leaves and petals of flowers, in the skins and pulp of fruit, and that their water supply is in some measure associated with the particular colour that happens to be present.

Having been greatly interested in the natural history of birds through the artistic work of my nephews, M. and E. Detmold, I could not help being struck with the fact that white was a common colour with Arctic birds and animals, and the white roses of my early flower experiments came obligingly to my help, and have made me venture to say in this paper that white plumage in birds and white hair in animals are protective against cold.

I will quote here a paragraph from Mr. Poulton's most interesting work on *The Colours of Animals*, and, as far as my reading has taken me, this is the only place where the colour white has been looked upon as having a true physiological value. Mr. Poulton touches on the subject of white plumage, white hair having a relation to temperature. He makes reference to Lord Walsingham's presidential address to the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union in 1885. The following statement occurs in the address: 'Birds and animals living through the winter naturally require to retain in their bodies a sufficient amount of heat to enable them to maintain their existence, with unreduced vitality, against the severities of the climate. Insects, on the contrary, require rapidly to take advantage of transient gleams of sunshine during the short summer season, and may be content to sink into a dormant condition so soon as they have secured the reproduction of their species; only to be revived in some instances by a return of exceptionally favourable conditions.'

I mentioned in the earlier part of my paper that one could test the temperature of flowers blindfold, and I have often made the test on my own cheeks; but I have been able to prove the

truth of my assertion, for, through the kindness of Dr. Campbell, the president of the Normal College for the Blind at Norwood, I made my temperature test with some chrysanthemums on some blind students at Norwood, and I received the answers to my questions that I expected, namely, that the students felt a distinct difference in temperature between a yellow chrysanthemum and a dark one. It was an interesting half-hour, for I began my tests with Dr. Campbell himself, and, as he wished to give his evidence as intelligently as possible, there was a little apology on his part before the test was made as to his not quite knowing my wishes on the subject. I therefore asked him to simply tell me what he felt when his cheek was touched with flower No. 1, and what he felt when it was touched with flower No. 2—namely, whether one flower felt warmer or colder than the other.

I received for answer that the first flower used felt cooler than the second one; this was all I wanted. And then followed tests with some half-dozen students, who came to the same conclusions as Dr. Campbell; but, singularly enough, they did not jump to their answers as I should have expected, for the sense of touch is thought to be abnormally acute with the blind. Mrs. Campbell beat them all in quickness of decision; and I shall never forget the unerring rapidity of judgment shown by a lady the very morning I tested Professor Babington with the chrysanthemums. I explained to her that I believed certain flowers felt warm or cold according to their colour, and, putting my nosegay on the table in a promiscuous mass, asked her to note any differences. I did not prepare her by saying that I considered yellow a cold colour, but let her form her own conclusions. Each flower was picked up separately, held to the cheek for a second, and judgment given in another second.

Now I have given my reader an account of the faith that is in me with regard to the temperature of flowers, simply on the basis of experiments where the sense of touch gave judgment.

The scientific reader is naturally anxious to have more than a mere statement of mine, such as flowers varying in colour from yellow to dark red have a temperature that corresponds to their colour. He is asking now for a series of readings taken from a thermometer, that must speak the truth—scientific truth at least we know is found at Hatton Garden. I say I have not been able to get a suitable thermometer to make these thermal tests. Indeed, it is only the chrysanthemum with incurved petals that

would allow of the test being made by an instrument. I offer my suggestions on this subject, not as scientific facts, but rather as toys to be used in the playground of science. After all, what is science? The outcome of numerous observations which have been made by clear-sighted people so often that they settle down into tradition and finally become law.

E. B. SHULDHAM.

### *Filia Pulchrrior.*

IT was so clever of Mrs. Harrington, everybody said, to present her daughter at the earliest possible moment, instead of keeping the girl in the background, as mothers who can boast of being still juvenile and pretty are only too prone to do. Her adoption of this course was a sort of challenge to criticisms and comparisons from which she had as yet little to fear; whereas its postponement for another season or two might find her much less advantageously situated. For, after all, the irrefutable testimony of the dread Red-book was there to convince the most incredulous that Mrs. Harrington had spent a matter of six-and-thirty years here below, and time must end by impairing any complexion, be it never so carefully nursed.

Now, it is true that pretty Mrs. Harrington was extraordinarily youthful-looking for her age; but it is not true that she nursed her complexion ('Heaven has blessed me with a hide which will neither wrinkle nor burn,' she was wont to declare), nor can it be said of her that she was a clever woman. If she had decided that her daughter's 'coming out' should take place in the latter's seventeenth year, her reason was in all probability that which she gave to her numerous friends; and although, as the daughter of a peer, she could not have concealed the date of her birth, had she wished to do so, it may be doubted whether she had any desire to blink a fact in which she took some legitimate pride.

'Rachel is dead sick of governesses,' was her explanation, 'and so am I; we shall both rejoice in escaping from their tyranny and being free to go about together. She is much better educated, too, by this time than I ever was, besides being hundreds of years older and wiser.'

So these two beautiful ladies adorned and charmed London society hand in hand, as it were, throughout the months of May and June; and of course the usual speeches were made, with something more than usual sincerity, about the difficulty of



determining which was the elder and which the younger of an apparent couple of sisters. As to the more delicate question of assigning the palm of beauty to the vivacious, golden-haired little mother or to the tall, slim, grave daughter, whose eyes were sometimes grey and sometimes dark blue, there was room for difference of opinion; but nobody could, or did, deny that Mrs. Harrington was far more amusing to talk to than Miss Rachel. Mrs. Harrington was amusing partly because her juvenility of character, which was on a par with that of her aspect, prompted her at all times to say whatever chanced to come into her head, partly by reason of her frank, refreshing delight in the social gaieties from which she had long been banished by the protracted illness of an invalid husband and by her subsequent widowhood. Now that, after a two years' period of quasi-seclusion, she had definitely thrown her widow's cap over the mill, few remembered the circumstance that there had once upon a time been a Mr. Harrington. She herself was too simple and unaffected to make any pretence of lamenting the somewhat fractious old person to whose opulent keeping she had been transferred erstwhile from the schoolroom by her impecunious parents. She had been a patient and cheerful wife—in the face of severer trials than anyone suspected—her reward had come at last, and it was scarcely to be expected that her cheerfulness should be diminished thereby. For the rest, she gave her suitors—who were numerous and occasionally importunate—to understand that liberty, combined with an ample income, satisfied her ambition too well to be lightly surrendered. Admiration and attention she appreciated to the full; but as for matrimony—apply elsewhere, if you please!

‘Once bitten, twice shy,’ she remarked, with her accustomed candour, to George Harrington, her elderly cousin by marriage, who had succeeded to a portion only of his late relative's estates. ‘There isn't a man in England who could prevail upon me to become his slave at this time of day, though I quite feel that, for your sake, I ought to marry again. It is monstrous of me, I know, to keep you out of Brackenhurst; but—what can I do? I was as much astonished as anybody when the will was read.’

The will under which Mrs. Harrington enjoyed a life interest in the pleasant demesne alluded to, subject to her remaining a widow, was not such a very astonishing one, nor had it disappointed George Harrington.

‘Oh, your claims were superior to mine,’ he answered. ‘I

expected nothing, and I obtained an increase of means which is no trifle, I can assure you, to the father of half a dozen costly children. Besides,' he added drily, 'I don't despair of Bracken-hurst yet. Protest as you will, my dear Annette, I venture to prophesy that I shall have the pleasure of offering you the handsomest wedding present I can afford before either of us is much older.'

'But when I tell you that there is no man in England who could tempt me!'

George smiled. That assertion might be literally true, he thought, without prejudice to the accuracy of his prediction; for he happened to be cognizant of a certain episode in his fair cousin's history which had attracted little or no notice at the time of its occurrence. He was, however, a discreet, taciturn man; so his only retort was:

'You'll marry again, my dear—you'll certainly marry again; you're "built that way," as people say nowadays. Don't make an imprudent alliance, that's all. But I dare say Rachel, who has an old head on young shoulders, may be trusted to preserve you from imprudences.'

It was, indeed, a fact, which was rapidly becoming a notorious one, that that remarkable child of seventeen exercised a restraining influence over her less circumspect parent. The two, who were ever the best of friends, and between whom no shade of rivalry existed, had many a laugh together upon the subject of this reversal of their respective parts.

'Where you get your wisdom and knowledge from, Rachel, I can't imagine,' the elder lady would exclaim; 'but it really does seem as if you had been sent into the world to keep me out of scrapes! Already we pass for sisters, and I foresee the day—after you have married Willie Finch and become a matron——'

'Am I going to marry Willie Finch?' the girl interrupted.

'It looks like it, and I don't know that you could do better. I was going to say that very soon after you are a married woman you will be generally set down as my mother.'

Meanwhile, Mrs. Harrington had not so completely divested herself of maternal responsibilities as to ignore what is often pronounced to be a mother's first duty. Not a few admirers had the air of being Rachel's and her own joint property; but she drew distinctions. Some of these gentlemen were eligible, others were not. She retained the latter for her own delectation and passed on the former, amongst whom Willie Finch seemed to be entitled

to the place of honour. He was a good-looking young fellow, well born, well-to-do, and in the smartest set. There was nothing against his character that she had ever heard—nothing, at least, beyond the usual sort of thing, which of course doesn't signify. Moreover, Rachel quite liked him. Rachel was not the girl to fall ridiculously in love with anybody, her mother thought. Parting with her dearest and most sympathetic companion would be horrid, to be sure; but it was one of those horrors which, like death, must needs be faced sooner or later.

She was fond of making this statement, which her daughter, not being of a contradictory disposition, generally received in silence.

'I like myself very well as I am, mammy dear,' was Rachel's nearest approach to recalcitrancy.

For her own part the girl did not look upon that severance as an inevitable event—or rather she doubted whether it would be brought about, should it eventually come, after the fashion so philosophically contemplated by her mother. She was of one mind with old George Harrington respecting certain perils, and her vigilance in mounting guard over her natural protectress left nothing to be desired. Not, indeed, that she as yet discerned the approach of any formidable foe. She was as thoroughly acquainted with her dear mammy as one mortal can be with another, and casual flirtations gave her no disquietude. Sundry sanguine gentlemen might deem themselves justified in entertaining hopes; but Rachel, who had observed their common inability to heighten or diminish the delicate colour on Mrs. Harrington's cheeks, knew better than to take them seriously.

Therefore this chicken became as flustered as any old hen within range of a hovering hawk when, on a sudden, there came into the field of her vision a stranger whose bow and subsequent shake of the hand did beyond question cause her mother to blush vividly. Strictly speaking, Colonel Dasent was not quite a stranger; for she remembered to have met him, years before, in her grandfather's house, and she had since heard him alluded to as having acquired wounds, honours and a brevet colonelcy in Indian frontier warfare; but what she could not call to mind was any previous reference to him on her mother's part as 'quite the oldest friend I have in the world.' It was in the above terms that Mrs. Harrington introduced Colonel Dasent to her daughter, and Rachel fancied that that sunburnt warrior also reddened slightly on hearing himself thus described. She had to admit to herself,

a little against her will, that he was remarkably handsome and that he had a good sort of face; but she met his somewhat needlessly cordial advances with a good deal of hauteur. If he was her mother's oldest friend, he was not yet hers, and whether he would ever have the right to call himself her friend at all remained to be seen.

'Mammy, who is this Colonel Dasent?' she began, in an inquisitorial tone of voice, while driving away from the evening entertainment at which her encounter with him had taken place.

From the dark corner of the brougham wherein she was reclining Mrs. Harrington replied, speaking through a yawn. 'Oh. Hal Dasent!—I'm sure I must have told you about Hal Dasent. haven't I? We were children together, he and I. ages ago—before the flood. I won't swear that we weren't even child lovers in those dim old days. I have scarcely seen him since—only once or twice, I believe. You sound as if you didn't like him; but please do like him, for he is really a dear old thing, and I have begged him to consider himself free of the house while he is in London.'

Was this assumption of amiable indifference a trifle overdone? If Miss Rachel thought so, she sensibly refrained from saying so, and it was not until some days later—by which time Colonel Dasent had twice dined with her mother and had plainly revealed the state of his feelings to a clear-sighted observer—that she took occasion to interrogate George Harrington upon the subject.

'Oh, yes; your precocious intuition hasn't deceived you; it never does,' that gentleman did not hesitate to reply, with a good-humoured laugh. 'There was an attachment—owing to lack of the needful, it never went quite the length of an engagement, I understand—before your mother married your father. Then, at a later date, there were—what shall I say?—passages, harmless passages, which put your father's back up, it was supposed. You may remember that your poor father's back was rather easily put up. So Hal Dasent went where India and glory awaited him. He is one of the best fellows that ever stepped, and I was sure that he would take the long step from East to West as soon as military duties set him free. He finds your mother free: is it too much to hope that he will find your mother's defending dragon amenable? You may say, of course, that I am not a disinterested counsellor——'

'No; I sha'n't say that. I know you, and I trust you,' the girl gravely interjected.

'Thanks. Well, you see, it is a foregone conclusion that Annette will take a second husband; you are just as well aware of that as I am. And you may depend upon it that she might do worse—very much worse—than choose Hal Dasent. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, my dear.'

Rachel did as she was advised. There was certainly something in what her confidant urged, and closer intimacy with Colonel Dasent seemed to confirm his favourable opinion of that constant lover. Of the Colonel's love and constancy there could, at all events, be no doubt; for he eagerly availed himself of Mrs. Harrington's hospitality as often as she remembered to invite him, and sometimes even when she did not. Whether these fine qualities had their counterpart in her mother's psychical equipment or not was another question; but Rachel was inclined, upon the whole, to believe that there was more hope for him than for anybody else. What chiefly impressed itself upon her was that Colonel Dasent was in a hurry—perhaps in rather too great a hurry—whereas her mother very evidently was not. Ultimate results, however, could be foretold and would have to be accepted.

This being so, the young lady took up a provisionally quiescent attitude, and devoted herself rather more than had hitherto been her wont to the contemplation of her own future, which appeared to demand something in the shape of decision. 'Well,' she said to herself, 'there is always Willie Finch'—and if the popular, self-complacent youth to whom she alluded could have read her thoughts, he would probably have been both surprised and wholesomely humbled thereby. Quite a large number of ladies would doubtless have been only too glad to share Mr. Finch's prosperous lot; but Rachel Harrington could find no higher mental praise for him than that she supposed he would do, if it came to that. It would pretty certainly come to 'that,' sooner or later: for her common sense—supplemented, it may be, by a touch of prescient jealousy—warned her that a *ménage à trois* would not do at all. In common with not a few persons of her age and sex, she esteemed herself proof against the slightly ridiculous malady of love; but this, she reflected, need not deter her from eventually espousing Willie, who, she felt sure, was consumed with no ardent passion for her charms. 'He is a good deal more in love with mammy than he is with me, and if it hadn't been for

mammy, he would never have looked at me twice,' she assured her conscience, with a little laugh.

Thus it came to pass that the assiduous Mr. Finch met with some measure of encouragement. Not with too much encouragement, of course, because one had to wait and see what was going to happen; still with enough to keep him up to the mark.

Not until the season was well advanced, and Hal Dasent, now the established and intimate associate of the Harrington ladies, had exhibited a patience beyond all praise, did a conversation which one of them had been staving off with no small skill at last take place.

'Annette,' began the faithful man (he had all his life been permitted to address Mrs. Harrington by her baptismal name), 'how much longer, please, are you going to hold me at arm's length?'

'Good gracious!' she exclaimed, 'is this what you call being held at arm's length? Why, you are in the house morning, noon and night!'

'Yes, I know; you have been as kind and friendly as possible. Yet, unreasonable as I may appear, I am not quite satisfied.'

'How very tiresome of you! What *can* you have expected?'

'Something more than I am likely to get, I dare say. There it is, though—or rather, there it isn't, perhaps. The thing I want, that is.'

'Oh,' pleaded Mrs. Harrington pathetically, '*don't* be horrid!'

'I don't wish to be. Nevertheless, one is entitled, surely, to be told how one stands. At present you know everything, whereas I know nothing. You know, I mean, that I haven't changed in all these years, and that I love you as much as I ever did.'

'My dear Hal, are you aware of my age?'

'Of course I am. What has that to do with the question?'

'Lots to do with the question—naturally! I have a grown-up daughter, for instance.'

'Who will be a married daughter soon, if you can arrange it. Yes; I have noticed your anxiety on that point. I don't altogether sympathise, mind you.'

'I should have thought, from what you said just now, that you would. Anyhow, you must see that Rachel will have to be the first consideration with me until she does marry.'

Upon the theory—the highly plausible theory—that Mrs. Harrington wished to gain time this hint was not an infelicitous



one. It served its purpose, inasmuch as Hal Dasent, perceiving what it implied, refrained from demanding a more definite reply. He felt bound, however, to remark that, while he understood the desire of mothers in general to see their daughters established, Rachel struck him as being very young to have all the cares of matrimony thrust upon her.

‘No younger than I was when they were thrust upon me,’ Mrs. Harrington returned.

‘Oh, if you are content that history should repeat itself in her case——!’

‘Hal, there must be something wrong with your liver to-day, or you would never be so rude and disagreeable. Besides, if you had devoted the most superficial study to Rachel, you would realise that she is anything but young. Added to which, Willie Finch isn’t—well, you know who and what he isn’t. So there is no sort of point in that sneer of yours, you see.’

Dasent did not insist. Years of India had left his liver intact; he knew—or thought he knew—pretty well who and what Mr. Finch was; likewise, he had studied Rachel Harrington closely enough to know—or to think that he knew—pretty well what she was. But he held his peace. The girl, after all, seemed capable of taking care of herself; and as for his own hopes, he had waited too long for their fulfilment to wreck them by injudicious forcing of the pace now that the winning-post was in sight.

Already there had sprung up between the somewhat grave, reserved soldier and the girl who was likely to become his step-daughter a tacit sentiment of amity, which deepened day by day. The more they saw of one another the better friends they grew, and their mutual comprehension was none the less complete because they never exchanged verbal confidences. These, indeed, would have been superfluous, and might easily have proved embarrassing. Without need for words, they understood that they were united by a common aim; each managed to admire and feel grateful to the other while avoiding spoken appreciation. Rachel recognised the Colonel’s generous tolerance of her mother’s innumerable flirtations, and he, on his side, was touched by the girl’s matter-of-course self-effacement. ‘It will all come right in the long run,’ they silently assured one another; ‘only we must keep our eyes upon a certain person and see that she does not get herself into any serious trouble.’

This unavowed pact was all very well and entirely creditable to both the contracting parties; but it could not exclude—Dasent



ended by realising that it ought not to exclude—all reference to subsidiary considerations. Therefore he made so bold as to say point-blank, one afternoon, when Willie Finch, at the conclusion of a long visit, had left him alone with Rachel, ‘I hope you won’t, you know.’

The girl did not ask him to explain himself. ‘So do I sometimes,’ she composedly answered; ‘but the chances are that I shall. He is as good as another, don’t you think so?’

‘No,’ returned Dasent almost sharply; ‘that’s exactly what I do not think. Backbiting isn’t much in my line; yet, when all’s said, a man necessarily knows things which women and children can’t hear, and you have no father, and I might—hang it all!—be your father, mightn’t I?’

‘Oh, yes,’ agreed Rachel, with her faint, demure smile; ‘only I think, if you don’t mind, I would rather not be told about poor Willie Finch’s misdeeds. They don’t really matter.’

‘But, my dear child, they do matter! Not that they are specially heinous; he may, in your phrase, be “as good as another”—that is, no worse than other young fellows in the gay set to which he belongs. But what I maintain is that he isn’t nearly good enough for you.’

Rachel laughed. ‘Oh, I’m not particular,’ she declared; ‘I shall not ask too much of my husband, whoever he may be. For choice I would rather have no husband at all; but one can’t choose.’

‘Why not?’

The girl raised her eyes—beautiful, truthful, rather sad eyes they were, he thought—to his, but made no reply. Of course he perceived what she meant; yet he was reluctant to admit that she was in the right. Why—seeing that she and he liked and understood one another so well—should her position be rendered untenable by her mother’s probable remarriage? If, in the long colloquy which ensued, and in which no names were mentioned, she did not tell him why, she nevertheless made it clear to him that her mind was made up as to that matter. He was finally reduced to saying, with a touch of displeasure:

‘Well, you won’t be guided by me, I suppose; but it’s a sure and certain fact, all the same, that you don’t know as much about human nature or your own nature as you think you do. You have taken notions into your head which are sheer, fantastic rubbish. You will most undoubtedly fall in love at least once before you die: everybody does.’

'One wouldn't if one were married,' Rachel objected.

'Oh, I'm afraid one might. Such things have happened.'

'I shouldn't allow such a thing to happen to me,' the girl tranquilly returned. 'Even if I were inflammable—but I'm not—I should always look upon my husband as a sort of lightning conductor. You see, I'm not like——'

What had she been upon the brink of saying? She abstained at any rate from concluding her sentence, nor was she invited to do so. Further quasi-paternal admonitions appearing to leave her cold, Dasent wound up by exclaiming:

'Well, I have meddled to no purpose, that is evident! You are bent upon accepting this young scapegrace, then?'

'Would you mind very much if I did?' Rachel asked.

'I cannot,' he answered, with a vehemence for which the occasion scarcely seemed to call, 'conceive anything that I should mind much more!'

A few days later Mr. Finch to his avowed amazement and chagrin, was unequivocally rejected. Rachel displayed much patience in permitting him to upbraid her, but expressed a confident hope that he would feel better soon. 'You aren't really in love with me, you know,' she calmly observed. 'If you are in love with anybody, you are in love with my mother, whom nobody can resist, and it was for the sake of being near her, not for my sake, that you first began following us about. But I don't think you will ever break your heart about any one; and I have a fellow-feeling for you there, because I shall certainly never break mine.'

'That may very well be,' the young man gloomily rejoined; 'for you have no heart to be broken.'

He then departed, smiting himself on the waistcoat, in illustration of the shattering blow which she had inflicted upon his own. Not long afterwards he actually did offer the fragments of that injured organ to Mrs. Harrington, who was vastly amused and exhilarated by her undesigned conquest.

But this was a subsequent episode, which served to enliven those rather dull summer weeks when most of Mrs. Harrington's male friends, including Colonel Dasent, had betaken themselves to Scotland, in quest of healthier recreation than London drawing-rooms could provide. At the time of poor Willie's dismissal by her daughter Mrs. Harrington was not at all amused, nor did she fail to visit the instigator of a provoking fiasco with her condign displeasure. For Rachel made no secret of the fact that she had

refused Mr. Finch in deference to the expressed wish of Mrs. Harrington's oldest friend.

'I should have accepted what seemed to be my destiny,' the girl acknowledged, 'only he put me off with his funny, old-fashioned ideas. And, all things considered, I am much obliged to him for having put me off.'

'Then I am not!' cried her mother, in much vexation. 'Why can't he mind his own business? Why should he imagine that he understands better than I do what is for your happiness? I owe Hal Dasent one for this!'

She lost no time in acquitting herself of her debt. Whence it resulted that Colonel Dasent went off to shoot grouse instead of receiving that invitation to stay at Brackenhurst which he had been led to expect. He did not, to tell the truth, go unwillingly. There are limits to the endurance of the most long-suffering mortals, and he had in all conscience (so he felt) submitted to about enough. When he was called 'a downright nuisance,' in so many words, self-respect compelled him to rejoin that he would at least cease to be a nuisance for the future. Whereupon Mrs. Harrington, with a shrug of her pretty shoulders, remarked, 'Well, I'm sure I hope you will. Do, please, try!'

It is true that she afterwards showed some signs of relenting; perhaps it was hardly in her character to part on bad terms with anybody if she could help it. But Colonel Dasent responded no further than politeness and old acquaintance required. He was pardonably incensed against the woman for whose sake he had lived and grown grey as a bachelor; she was not, he now perceived, in any way the woman of whom he had dreamed under blazing suns and through bitter, chilly nights out there on the North-west frontier; she cared for nothing, except the things which are not worth caring for; she was shallow, flighty, selfish—even a bad mother, perhaps. Annette, in short, was a flirt pure and simple, while he, for his part, was no better than an old idiot.

Such discoveries, always painful, are particularly so when made at Hal Dasent's time of life; but a discovery still more unpleasant remained in store for him. It was while he was plodding homewards alone across the moor one day, after having shot rather badly and having quitted his companions on the plea of being out of sorts, that this horrid revelation dawned suddenly upon his shocked consciousness. Thinking, as usual, of Annette, and wishing (also as usual) that she were a little more like what he had fondly imagined her to be—a little more like her own

daughter, for instance—he stopped short and exclaimed aloud, with an abrupt, unmirthful laugh, ‘Good Lord! I *am* an old idiot!’

Possibly he was; he had already, as has been mentioned, arrived at that conclusion upon somewhat less convincing grounds. But it is not, unfortunately, by recognising his idiocy that a man can cure himself of that humiliating disorder, and however preposterous, not to call it disgraceful, Hal’s love for Rachel Harrington might be, he had to reckon with it as a stubborn reality. In justice to him it must be said that his invariable habit was to face realities and make the best that could be made of them. There was nothing very satisfactory to be made out of this one; still he saw, upon reflection, that there were one or two circumstances connected with it for which he might well be thankful. To begin with, Annette did not care—and in all probability never had cared—a button for him. That, anyhow, was a good job. Then Rachel, obviously and inevitably, only cared for him in the sort of way that a girl may care for a friend of more than double her own age: which was likewise, of course, a good job. Thirdly, and lastly, he had not parted with self-control to the absurd extent of being unable to forsake the neighbourhood of what was palpably beyond his reach. Employment in India—which country he had inwardly resolved to see no more—was, he knew, to be had for the asking. Back to India, therefore, he would certainly sail so soon as he should have brought down a few more birds and perhaps laid a stag or two low. Adieux to Mrs. Harrington and her daughter might be, and had much better be, addressed to them through the post. Self-control is a fine quality, and the post-office is a valuable intermediary; but the one is only too apt to degenerate into self-sufficiency, while the other furnishes about as many temptations as it obviates. It furnished Colonel Dasent, in process of time, with an invitation from Mrs. Harrington to join in shooting the Brackenhurst coverts, and such confidence had he in his ability to keep his own counsel that he accepted that invitation almost without hesitating a moment. The letter which he had contemplated despatching a month or two back still remained unwritten, for the very good reason that he had as yet received no definite offer of an Indian appointment. He could not, consequently, say good-bye; nor was it easy to think of any good excuse for declining what had a little the appearance of an extended olive-branch.

Is it necessary to add that his pride met with a speedy fall? In such cases there is always one contingency which is obvious to

everybody, save the person chiefly concerned, and although Hal Dasent may have been justified in taking it for granted that he had nothing to hope or to fear from the old love, it was hardly to be expected of his modesty that he should foresee possible peril arising out of any action on the part of the new. For the matter of that, Rachel herself assuredly foresaw none. Like Hal, she had her secret, which she was firmly resolved to keep; like him, she felt certain that her love had been given to one who could never return it; and it was this common delusion, no doubt, that hurried two astonished, slightly shamefaced persons into a mutual avowal before they could stop themselves.

'I can't believe it!' Hal exclaimed, after enough had been said to vanquish the most obstinate incredulity.

'Nor can I,' Rachel half-tearfully returned. 'It is too—too—'

'Atrocious of me?' he hazarded.

The girl confessed that she had not been going to make use of that adjective. 'And yet,' she sighed, 'perhaps it is atrocious of you. I am sure it is atrocious of me!'

He did not ask her in what the alleged atrocity consisted. Neither then nor at any subsequent period was his former attachment to Mrs. Harrington alluded to between them as constituting a bar to their union; and this was not because they ignored it, but by reason of a certain delicacy which forbade the introduction of that subject into their deliberations. What they knew they knew, and what their thoughts were with regard to the present and the past there was no occasion for them to state articulately. It was, however, quite plainly and decisively stated by one of them that her mother's consent to a marriage of which the latter would most probably disapprove must be considered a *sine quâ non*.

'Happen what may, I can't distress mammy,' she declared, 'and I am afraid this is very likely to distress her. Of course, you see, she will make a great deal of the difference in our ages.'

'Oh, of course,' the Colonel rather ruefully agreed. 'And she will be quite right, too.'

'No; she won't be right. If you and I think nothing of the difference, what can it matter? Only I won't and can't make her unhappy, whether she is right or wrong. Do you think that shows that I don't care for you as much as you care for me?'

Had he been disposed to think so her eyes would have unde-

ceived him ; but in truth he read her nature too well to do her that injustice. He was very reasonable, very humble, grateful and overjoyed. He fully agreed that her mother must not be made unhappy ; but he did not, oddly enough, anticipate any serious opposition on Annette's part. That good-humoured, pleasure-loving, frivolous little soul might be vexed—possibly even piqued—for a moment ; yet, after all, if she was fond of anybody, she was fond of her daughter, while she had certainly ceased to be fond (in an erotic sense) of her presumptive son-in-law. With a light heart, therefore, he embarked upon one of those enterprises which have never since the world began been carried to a successful issue.

It was after a satisfactory day's shooting that he took advantage of what appeared to him to be just his opportunity. Mrs. Harrington, with several other ladies, had walked out to meet the returning sportsmen that raw, chilly afternoon, and had not turned back when the rain, which had been threatening for some hours, began to fall. She laughed at Colonel Dasent for exclaiming against her omission to provide herself with waterproof or umbrella ; she had a constitution proof against such despicable little maladies as coughs and colds, she assured him, and rather enjoyed getting wet through once in a while. She was in such good spirits, and seemed to have so completely forgotten her grudge against him, that he was encouraged to make his confession and get it over with the scantiest of introductory remarks. The rest of the party had hurried on ahead ; his companion and he had reached, at the moment, the edge of a small copse—a spot ever afterwards memorable to her, if not to him—and it seemed natural enough that, on hearing what he had to say, she should stop short. But was it natural that for an interminable minute or more she should speak never a word ? Was it natural that, when he timidly interrogated her face, he should encounter a stony stare which did not express displeasure so much as blank disbelief ?

‘ I am afraid I have startled you,’ he said.

‘ Startled sounds rather feeble,’ she answered, with a forced laugh ; ‘ can't you think of a more emphatic word ? ’

He could think of many words which might apply to her mental condition ; but he ventured to hope that there would be no need to use them. He ventured to hope that, when she had got over the first surprise, which he himself shared—

‘ Oh,’ she interrupted, quickly recovering some resemblance of



her customary levity, 'there's no limit to the things that you venture to hope, my dear Hal; the only difficulty is to reconcile them with one another. One hope, though, must be abandoned even by a man of your sanguine temperament, let me tell you, and that is that Rachel will marry you without my leave—which will never be given. Oh, but certainly and absolutely, never!'

'On the ground of my age, do you mean?'

'Well, on that ground, if you like. It is a sufficient one, and there is this advantage about it, that it can't be explained away. Explanations and discussions are always such a bore—don't you think so? Go away—go back to India, like a good man (as, after all, you are in your way), and let the poor child forget you. You will soon forget her, too; you are rather an adept at forgetting, you know.'

'And you?'

'I'm different,' answered Mrs. Harrington calmly.

'Would it not be more true to say that you are indifferent?'

'Perhaps so; what does it signify? All I wish to impress upon you is that, as regards this matter, you will find me inexorable.'

Inexorable he found her, although he employed, in the sequel, some arguments which should have been powerful to break down her resolute opposition. The force of these, unhappily, was greatly lessened by Rachel, who showed no fight at all. That she loved her mother's whilom lover the girl had to avow—could not, indeed, help avowing—but that she should relinquish her own inclinations at her mother's behest was apparently so much a matter of course that it was hard to tell how severe or how slight that sacrifice was to her. She made, at all events, no wry faces over it.

'I was afraid from the first,' said she, 'that we had set our hearts upon an impossibility, and I only beg of you now not to worry poor mammy any more. You don't know, I'm sure, how upset she has been about it. But she hopes and thinks that you will soon put this fancy away from your mind. And,' added Rachel valiantly, after a pause, 'so do I.'

'You propose to put it away from *your* mind, then?' the hurt and discomfited Colonel asked.

She nodded. 'I shall certainly try. You yourself must see that I ought to try.'

'I see that you will, and I can't doubt that you will succeed,' he was stung into rejoicing.

Yet at the bottom of his heart there lurked a conviction of



something else equally indubitable—something which her apparently cheerful acquiescence in an adverse verdict could not altogether conceal. Say what she would, Rachel did love him, and that consolation, such as it was, he might bear away into his Oriental exile. For, of course, there was nothing for it now but India, whither he travelled one stage by betaking himself to London forthwith.

What became of him after his accelerated and somewhat wrathful departure from Brackenhurst Rachel never heard. Probably she would not in any case have inquired; but, as it happened, the events of the next six weeks were such as to claim the whole of her time, besides well-nigh all her capacity for anxiety and suffering. Mrs. Harrington had only her own imprudence to thank, the doctors regretfully said, for an attack of pneumonia which brought her to the very brink of death. Many and many a time before had that stalwart little lady been guilty of the folly of standing about in wet clothes; but *tant va la cruche à l'eau!* It was a question whether she would pull through, and although—thanks to her fine constitution and her daughter's admirable devotion—she did eventually pull through, few of her former friends would have recognised the pallid, emaciated invalid who was transported with infinite care to the sunshine of the Riviera shortly after Christmas.

The sun does not always shine in that sheltered region, nor, when it does, is it always accompanied by a high temperature; but Mrs. Harrington's luck having caused her to chance upon a favourable season, her health promptly benefited, and in the course of a few weeks she was, or proclaimed that she was, quite herself again. But Rachel, alas! was not her old self—was noticeably unlike her old self, despite the heroic efforts which she made to behave as though there had been no change in her. Mother and daughter remained, indeed, united by ties of the warmest affection; yet a gulf had opened between them, which neither affection nor affectation availed to span. Every day and every hour they were reminded of its existence, stretching wistful, pathetic hands to one another across it in vain, and only refraining from speech because it was so evident that speech could not make matters worse. The girl was marvellously sweet-tempered throughout; Mrs. Harrington, it must be confessed, was sometimes a little fretful and impatient. Yet it was not in her nature to put up for ever with discomforts which might be avoided. Such, at any rate, was the reason that she gave for

making a most unexpected announcement one afternoon, when she had been rendering a long drive delightful to her companion by her display of childishly high spirits.

'I've decided to climb down,' said she; 'anything is better than going on as we have been doing lately, and no man on earth is worth the misery that we have been giving ourselves. So I have written to Hal Dasent, who will be here, no doubt, in a hop, skip and a jump.'

'Oh, mammy!' exclaimed Rachel, with tears in her eyes, and perhaps rather more in her voice than it was expedient for her mother to perceive. 'But I don't want him to come,' she pleaded, not altogether mendaciously, 'and I don't even know where he is. In Asia, most likely.'

'Oh, but I know where he is,' her mother tranquilly returned; 'George has kept me informed of the fact that he is no farther away than London. Poor old George, who is under the impression that Hal can't bear to leave Europe while my health continues to be so precarious, and who still cherishes fond hopes of Brackenhurst! Well, I hope you and Hal will consent to live at Brackenhurst with me. I wonder whether you will! It's a lot to ask, I know, and that sort of arrangement is supposed never to answer; but——'

'Mammy!' cried Rachel again, in such pained accents that Mrs. Harrington suddenly burst into tears.

'Oh, how disgraceful this is!' the poor little woman laughed through her sobs. 'What will Cannes think of me for driving about in an open carriage at the most crowded hour of the afternoon, and howling like a baby? But that's just what I have always been, you see—you know what I am, don't you, dear? I can't do without you; I can't set up house all by myself in my—my babyish declining years! And if Hal Dasent is necessary to your happiness—he never was, or could have been, necessary to mine; but that's neither here nor there—I'll gladly swallow Hal Dasent, with his grey hair and his solemnity, and all the rest of his tiresome little attributes. Only don't turn me adrift!'

Upon that point it was easy to reassure the suppliant. Perhaps Rachel Harrington knew as well as she believed that she did what her mother was: on the other hand, perhaps she did not; since it is the lot of every mortal to be in some respects a mystery. But, however that may have been, it is certain that Colonel Dasent, who lost no time in obeying the summons conveyed to him, found in Mrs. Harrington a more generous and more sympathetic

friend than he had any right to expect. The situation was necessarily a somewhat awkward one; yet she contrived to carry it off, and neither then nor at any time during the ensuing twelvemonth was her presence irksome for one moment to two persons who appeared to derive their chief joy from gratifying her whims.

Everybody, of course, laughed at that scheme of a joint establishment which Mrs. Harrington proclaimed to her acquaintances on the occasion of her daughter's wedding, which took place in London shortly after Easter, and everybody prophesied that it would not last long. It lasted, however, as long as there was any need for it to last, and it was brought to an end not—as had been generally anticipated—by Mrs. Harrington's marriage, but by her death. Early in the next winter this took place, almost painlessly, at Cannes, whither her persistent cough, the advice of her doctor, and Rachel's disquietude had urged her to return.

'Do you know what I am dying of?' she asked her son-in-law, with a smile, on the last day of her life, when she was supposed to be in no immediate danger.

'You aren't dying at all; don't say such things!' he remonstrated.

'Oh, I am dying fast enough,' she composedly returned; 'but not of consumption. What is the matter with me is nothing more nor less than old age. Some people can't survive youth; it would be too ridiculous of them if they could! Others, like you and Rachel, are born middle-aged; so there's no reason why one shouldn't wish and expect for them years and years of placid contentment. As for me, I have had my day—and enjoyed it.'

Had she enjoyed it? If Colonel and Mrs. Dasent harbour any doubts upon that point, they wisely abstain from distressing one another by giving utterance to them. But George Harrington, a little remorseful over his unforeseen acquisition of a valuable estate, sometimes devotes a sigh to the memory of his predecessor.

'Poor Annette!' he murmurs; 'this is what one gets by having a daughter even prettier than oneself! But I suppose she couldn't help it; I suppose hardly anything that happens on the surface of this serio-comic little planet can really be helped. All the same, it seems rather hard lines that a light-comedy actress should be cast for a part in high tragedy.'

## *By the Yellow Sands.*

SUNLIGHT everywhere and the sparkle of water: that was the preponderating impression. Contributories were the singing of a lark or two high up over the fields on the left, and the measured cadence of a dog that barked monotonously from the village on the right. A happy little family of sandpipers flitted and whistled among the shingle and little rocks scattered about the beach in the immediate foreground.

As for me, I am half concealed by larger rocks, and can lie and watch and think or dream without danger of disturbing or being disturbed. I can lie on my back, if I like, and listen to the lark; can even dimly see him very far away. He hangs up there quite motionless: a dot, a tiny speck; like the full-stop which God's hand has written after the word Peace, which may be spelt out letter by letter in the deep blue of the sky, the quivering of the warm air that hangs just above the still bosom of the scarcely breathing earth, the shimmering quiet of the sea. One feels as though all Nature were joining in a *Te Deum*, and that one must not for anything commit the sacrilege of—say—coughing or moving one's foot in the shingle, lest the spell be broken and a mysterious spiritual communion rudely destroyed.

Out in the bay lie two or three little white-sailed yachts and five trawlers with red-brown sails; not one of them is moving; as idle, every one of them, as 'painted ships upon a painted ocean.' The fishermen in those five little vessels have given up all hope of getting home this day, it appears, and are fishing over the side with lines. As for the white-winged boats becalmed here and there, they may whistle for a breeze to take them ashore for lunch, but I think they will whistle in vain. The wind dare not breathe just now, for the *Te Deum* is in progress and must not be disturbed.

Even the sandpipers seem irreverent. One lazily feels that they really ought to know better than to whistle and talk in

church! Is it one's duty to throw a stone at them and put an end to the sacrilege by driving them farther afield?

'Idiotic idea!' says another sleepy impression; 'their piping is one of the verses of the *Te Deum*, and not the least beautiful; let them pipe, for God's sake.'

I am only too glad. One little fat fellow seems to have read my thoughts, for he has suddenly realised that I am not dangerous. Perhaps he thinks I am only a rock and my clothes seaweed. He watched me, however, for a considerable period before arriving at this conclusion.

He sat on a grey stone of his very own hue, and watched, and spoke of me to his companions who ran and piped among the shingle close at hand.

'What on earth is it?' I imagine him saying. 'Come up and have a look, some of you.' But they are all too busy finding Heaven-knows-what good things to eat among the stones—tiny insects, I suppose.

'No time,' one replies, 'too hungry; keep out of his way if he's a man or a dog—you needn't mind cows. What's he like?'

'Not an upstanding creature at all,' says my friend. 'Can't be a man, can he?'

'Men stand on two legs and bawl, and throw a stone at one,' replies the older and wiser bird.

'This thing doesn't move; it seems to be covered with seaweed,' replies my little fat, piping beauty.

'All right, then—don't worry,' says the other, bringing the debate to a conclusion in my favour; and my charmer doubts no longer, but flits close to my foot and runs and pecks at the stones, and runs and pipes and pecks and picks again. I scarcely dare to breathe lest he should fly away and leave me, which I feel, in my present ridiculously peaceful frame of mind, would be a calamity of the very first order.

Breathlessly I watch him for a minute and another. He runs within a hair's breadth of my hand, and in my breathlessness and agitation I unfortunately emit a kind of choky, gurgling cough.

Away flits my little charmer; back to his rocklet he flies, and sits and whistles startled interrogations to his parents and friends. 'What on earth was it?' he says. 'Did you hear?'

'Nothing to matter—nothing moved,' says some busy person. 'Don't worry us every time a jackdaw caws.'

But my friend is unconvinced, and sits awhile to watch and make sure; meanwhile some one else arrives upon the scene, and

my attention wanders; for here on the beach there are a thousand lovers to woo the jilting jade, and she is faithful to not one for more than a minute or two at a time.

A big black object comes sailing round the rocks at the corner of the little bay, sailing through the air upon rapidly beating sable wings, that carry him quickly over the very face of the burnished sea. He flies so close to the water that I fancy he must be interested in peering down into the mysterious depths, and is watching keenly as he almost brushes the surface of the water with his body—a cormorant.

'Settle here, within sight, you black beauty!' I inwardly pray, and lo! as though he had heard my prayer and was propitiously inclined, the black wings suddenly ceased to beat, they remained extended but motionless, the big body rose a little, swept onwards for five yards, tending downwards, then slid with scarcely a splash into the water, and the great bird floated, a blotch of shining jet, in the silver-blue of the sea.

'Now dive and fetch up something—let's see what you can do in the fishing line,' I pray once more, inarticulately but intensely. Verily all Nature is in an indulgent mood to-day, or my prayers have a wonderful persuasive power about them, for almost before I have time to frame my wish into unspoken words down, like a stone, goes the cormorant, and for a minute or more disappears from sight. Where will he turn up again—here, closer to me, or out, nearer France?

'Be an English bird, cormorant,' I whisper in my heart—'stick to the English shore and fish in British waters. England is mistress of the waves, and——'

There he is, and, by all that's propitious, thirty yards nearer shore! But his dive was fruitless; if he was hungry when he disappeared, he is hungry still, unless he found and ate something down below, which I do not think likely. Try again, cormorant!

No need to press my friend—down he goes a second time, and a second time he hunts in vain. Off he darts for a third attempt—he is not easily discouraged.

This time patience and perseverance are rewarded.

Up comes my sable fisher, and in his great jaws—well, it is so large that if one had not seen him go down and fetch it up, one might easily speculate as to whether the fish had brought the bird or the bird the fish. A huge, wide, flat creature of the dab or flounder persuasion, that kicks and struggles fore and aft like a flapping sail, but which Master Cormorant has gripped very tightly

by the middle. No use to struggle, my friend ; though your position, I admit, is most unenviable and must be exceedingly unpleasant. You have my profound sympathy. Why, my black friend is surely not attempting to *bolt* that great flapping thing ? Please, don't attempt it, my good creature, for you'll assuredly choke, and that would be a thousand pities. By all that's appalling, he is going to try, though.

Not only does he try, but he actually succeeds. Starting from his great grip upon the middle portion of his victim—the first grip by which he dragged it from its bed at the bottom of the sea ten feet down, where it had covered itself with sand in hopes of escaping the observation of such bad characters as my friend here—starting from that first huge mouthful, the cormorant has actually contrived to bolt the great fish—nine inches by twelve and an inch deep—swallowing him gradually, but in marvellously quick time, by means of a series of gulps, each of which sent him a stage upon his journey into Avernus.

It is a surprising and almost an appalling sight. I looked to see my black friend choke ; I looked to see the water churned by great wings and feet, as with agonised endeavour he strove to rid himself of the monstrous thing he had foolishly thought to consume with impunity ! He must infallibly choke and struggle and die asphyxiated—a victim to greed—and his enemy, though now reduced to a mere mangled mass of fins and bones, will be avenged. But lo ! there is no choking, no struggling—the thing undertaken is successfully carried out—a last big gulp and the dab has disappeared, and the ogre that ate him is still gulping and swallowing, though of his victim there is no more to be seen. Then come a shake or two of the neck, a fluttering of the wings that sends bright drops flying, a couple of scooping dips of the head into the water, setting a small stream running down the broad back—and the whole thing is over and done with. ‘*Te Deum laudamus!*’ says my friend. ‘I have dined, ha ! It was a struggle, but I did it, and I am happy.’ So was the dab happy, let us hope, until the finger of Fate touched him and his number went up. My cormorant waits a little while. Ye gods ! it is not surprising that he desires to rest and reflect ! He waits and, I suppose, digests ; at any rate, he swims slowly to and fro. I watch him. How huge he is !—as big as three gulls in one—and what a length of wing when he stands, as now, upon the water and sets them flapping at full extent ! No wonder the poor flounder darts away and sidles the sand over his back when he



sees this black terror descending upon him from above—a bolt from the blue indeed!—What a mercy it is that there are no monsters of the air to come swooping down from the clouds to grip *us*—you and me—by the middle and swallow us alive! How we should kick and yell, dear Mr. Reader; and what language some of us would use during the process of disappearance!—not you and I, of course, but others. Really, Mr. Dab, you have my profound sympathy and commiseration; even more of it than I felt at your first capture, for your feelings must have been horrible, and you took your fate like a gentleman.

Even as I lie and reflect my friend the cormorant, who scarcely does anything which is not unexpected and surprising, dives again. He reappears empty-mouthed, and disappears a second time. Then he sulkily flies away, round the corner of the little bay and out of sight—disgusted, seemingly, that he cannot fish up another dab to be gorged as he gorged the last.

If possible, I would follow that fine bird and warn him that he has eaten enough; that he should not tempt Providence by attempting to repeat his performance of but now. One day he will be found floating asphyxiated upon the sea, with a skate or a turbot of the size of Arthur's round table, half swallowed, towing him hither and thither as a warning to *gourmands*. Farewell, cormorant, and may that day be long distant! There are others I could spare better.

Close to my foot a jetsam cockle-shell, as I had believed it, suddenly behaves in a weird and startling manner. Its twin sides part, and from the midst there shoots out a bright red tongue, two inches in length, which turns quickly this way and that, like a snake about to strike. I take my foot out of the uncanny thing's reach. Does it want to eat me alive, boots first? Apparently not, for, having satisfied itself by means of a few twists and turns that the tide has not yet risen within reach, it performs a wonderful acrobatic feat in order to get itself an inch or two seawards. With a weird wriggle of its red tongue it contrives to turn head over heels, shell and all, with the net result of ground covered to the extent of about its own length in the desired direction. This acrobatic effort is twice repeated, after which the creature is apparently satisfied—or disgusted—for it suddenly retires within doors, shuts itself tightly inside, and lies once more upon the sand like the piece of helpless jetsam I had imagined it. Moreover, nothing will induce it to move again. I take it up and insert a thin wedge of stone; but it is clear that, without violence

and injury to the animal within, I might as well attempt to open a safe by blowing at it as to force his twin shells apart.

I try trickling a few drops of sea-water upon the shell just where the aperture had been before he hermetically sealed himself up against my attacks. I do this in the fond hope that he will mistake me for the rising tide, and will open his doors to the welcome inflow of water—but he knows better. I can imagine him winking his eye within there (like the elder and wiser oysters of Walrus and Carpenter fame), and hanging on to the sides of his house like grim death, while to my requests that he will kindly open his gates and allow me to gaze once more upon his features he replies, ‘What! *me* open? Not much. I prefer the sea to the frying-pan, my friend. You’d better let me go; you can’t do it.’

I give it up—I am defeated. Into a little pool I toss him, and there he lies and chuckles over his victory.

A great grey gull and two kittiwakes have arrived. Like tiny yachts they have seated themselves upon the still sea, and there they sit and sit, doing nothing. This must be, I suppose, their siesta-time, for as a rule they are busy folk, these sea-gulls. I very rarely see them actually eating, except when they have flown inland and are following the plough, as they love to do, in order to pick up any treasure-trove that may be revealed in the fresh-turned earth. But on the seashore they seem to me to prefer to promenade about—taking, indeed, a mild interest in any eatables that actually lie in their way, but not troubling to make any diligent effort to search for food. Probably the explanation is simply that I have not happened to be about at feeding-time, for they must surely pick up the bulk of their daily rations on the seashore rather than in the fields.

When the mackerel are in the bay, then they are active and excited indeed. Wherever the mackerel have pursued a shoal of small fry towards the shallows, and by raiding tactics have caused these unfortunates to come to the surface in order to escape the attentions of their persecutors, the poor creatures are sure to find new enemies ready and waiting for them. Wheeling about and around, and even sitting in the water and dining in ease and luxury, hundreds of gulls fill themselves at discretion with the gifts the gods—and the mackerel—have provided them withal. They eat, and shriek their great content, and eat again, till one would suppose they could eat no more; but until the shoal sinks once again beyond their reach their feasting continues.

As for the mackerel—I once enjoyed the privilege of seeing an army of mackerel successfully corner a shoal of small fry in a rocky shallow pool which was a *cul de sac*. The mackerel swam behind their victims in serried ranks—a company of hungry, determined creatures, intent upon a gorging feast to which there need be no limit. They had followed the fry for miles maybe, merely swallowing one here and one there to keep their appetites whetted. Now they had cornered them where there was no escape for their victims. No alert fisherman, on the look-out for just such an opportunity, was at hand to convert their triumph and feasting into captivity and lamentation—they might feast at will.

And, ye gods, feast they did! No one who has not seen it would believe that the cubic capacity of a mackerel could possibly deal successfully with the number of small fish he actually swallows. The way he conducts the operation of feasting is unique. Opening his mouth wide, the mackerel darts in among the small fry, some of which are perhaps one-third of his own length. In an instant one of these is to be seen sticking half in and half out of his mouth. Then the mackerel gives one gulp, and the victim has disappeared. Without a moment's delay the process is repeated, and repeated so many times that the spectator cannot fail to be concerned for the immediate future of the particular mackerel he has watched. Yet nothing happens. As for the fry, their helpless anguish is somewhat heartrending; the whole shoal of them boils and churns the water in an agony of fear; high into the air they leap, in order to avoid their voracious enemies, landing themselves, often enough, upon the weed-covered rocks which skirt the pool, and panting their lives out there rather than leap back into the seething mass of their harassed companions beneath.

Many poor victims on the occasion of the wholesale massacre which I have described were half-killed, but not eaten, and these, I perceived, sank to the bottom; but here a great number of crabs had already collected in order to take advantage of the opportunities thus offered them for a cheap feast. Apparently things become known pretty rapidly at the bottom of the sea, for certainly three minutes had not passed before these crabs turned up, hurrying from all sides to the scene of carnage, and feasting like vultures which have sighted carrion. What messenger sped out and spread the news? Probably the crabs put two and two together. They observed the shoal of fry passing overhead, and

the larger fish after them ; they knew, perhaps, of the *cul de sac* into which the victims were driven, and, said they, 'We will hurry up, and maybe we, too, shall have a look-in for once in our lives.'

Had the fishermen come up with their seine-nets that afternoon, they might have enclosed the entire shoal of many thousand mackerel. If sold by weight, one would suppose those feasted fish *must* have weighed very much more after the gorge than before it—namely, their own weight *plus* that of the shoal of small fry, now transferred to snug quarters beneath the lovely greens and blues and greys of their skins. But is it so? I have heard it denied. I have heard also an instructive tale tending towards an opposite conclusion, and give the anecdote for what it is worth. Upon entering a restaurant unfamiliar to him, in order to take luncheon, the young man of my story was, to his surprise, requested to step into the scales. He was duly weighed and the weight noted in a ledger. Having finished his repast and asked for the bill, he was again requested to submit to being weighed, when he was quickly informed that he owed one and ninepence. On the following day this gentleman, after a night's reflection, decided to lunch again at his new-found restaurant; but this afternoon he filled his pockets with small stones, which, having finished his meal, he emptied into the grate.

This time the result of his second weighing seemed to occasion the manager as well as the waiter some surprise. A third person was called into consultation, and heads were put together. The result of their consultation does credit to the consistency of their methods. 'Young man,' said the proprietor, 'we find we owe you three and fourpence.'

This story should go to prove that my feasted mackerel would have been a better catch after than before that great banquet—if I could guarantee it. I do not.

But I am still lying on my yellow sand-couch, and the sea is still a-sparkle in the sunlight, the monotonous dog has not yet wearied of emitting dissatisfied barks at intervals, and the lark is still at full chant somewhere overhead. Drowsily I watch the little pool in which I have deposited my obstinate cockle, which lies inert and sulky, refusing to open his mouth and show me that great red tongue of his—like a naughty child that declines to obey the doctor.

In my pool I now catch sight of a crab—a smallish green one; and by this crustacean I am forthwith thoroughly taken in and deceived; for when with my walking-stick I gently stir the little

fellow, in order to cause him to run about for my entertainment, I am touched to observe when he moves that he has been watching tenderly over a sick friend or relative—maybe a child of his own. Hurriedly he hastens back to the invalid, having first angrily chased my stick away, and shields the smaller and weaker creature with his own body. How beautiful! What a sweet and pathetic sight! I did not know that crabs would behave in this touching way, or that their cold, armoured economies were capable of feelings of love and tenderness, or indeed of any interest whatever in any fellow-creature—even their own progeny. Well, I am glad to find I was mistaken, and that I have hitherto misunderstood these good souls. I shall be very kind to them in future in recognition of their virtues and of my own injustice.

Let me see this invalid; it may be possible to ameliorate his condition. Again I touch my friend, and while he pursues the stick that angered him I fish out the object of his solicitude.

Alas! it is dead. This is really a very interesting and pathetic circumstance. The faithful thing, then, was watching over the body of its dead friend, determined to screen it from desecration; it is a kind and worthy creature, this crab, and its conduct has been most affecting—I feel a desire to do it a good turn—I determine to do so. I find it a dead fish, a tiny thing, and pop this into the pool close to the devoted one—the loyal friend.

Instantly the latter leaves his charge and makes for the new arrival. With a rapid motion he gathers the fish to himself, clasping his claws right round it, and hiding it beneath him just as tenderly as he had protected his poor, dying friend. What is this? Can I, then, have been deceived? I watch him most carefully—he is actually eating the fish. Then—but no, I will not believe it of him. I will continue to believe in his benevolence and reject the horrid suspicion of cannibalism.

All the same, I carry both crab and carrion to a neighbouring pool where they are out of sight, and there leave them. Let his motives be; they are not my business.

The heat of the day increases, and a slight haze over the sea seems to change the water into a huge cauldron of molten metal. If I had the energy I would bathe—how delicious it would be! I feel that it will come to this presently; but the determination must arrive suddenly, and armed with the necessary energy to rise and prepare; meanwhile I cannot be bothered.

Moreover, if I move, my friend the little fat sandpiper might go away, and that would be a calamity too great to be borne at

this moment of perfect peace. He has only now re-acquired confidence in me, or he has forgotten me, and is busily running and piping within a yard of my hand. How absurdly important it has become that I should not disturb him by breath or movement ! It is necessary to my happiness, I find, to watch this jolly little fat fellow at close quarters. The *summum bonum* would be to put out my hand and touch him ; to stroke his pretty snipe-like plumage and admire his long, thin legs and wonderfully bright eyes.

Alas ! his friends have called him away once more. Something has disturbed them, and with a whistled warning they have risen in a body somewhere along there where the grey-white shingle, their own shade to a touch, renders it difficult to distinguish them, and have wheeled seawards. My little plump companion flies piping after them and joins them. Good-bye to him for the present ; he will settle directly with his family and begin running, piping, and picking up invisible particles of food without an instant's pause. There is no time in this busy world for loafing, and no room for idlers.

Bathe, quotha ? Have I the energy ? This is the ' dinner-hour,' and I should be undisturbed. Talking of bathing, I received a terrible shock while bathing at this very place only a few days ago.

There had been mention of sharks—real, rampant, man-eating sharks had been seen in our bay. According to my informant, they had taken to following meat vessels from the Antipodes to our shores, in hopes of picking up gifts of offal or carrion *en route*. Bathers must take care what they did, said my informant, for some of these voracious monsters, instead of turning and swimming back to their own seas after escorting their convoys to England, had gone a-catering for themselves along the coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall, where, they might have heard, fat and toothsome human children, things with delightful white skins, are in the habit of playing about in the warm southern water. ' Little niggers are not a patch on them,' I can fancy some travelled shark informing the stay-at-homes ; ' take a trip over and see for yourselves.'

All this I had in my mind as I swam through the bright, sun-pierced water one morning but a week ago. I had it in my mind, indeed, but not as a fact to be remembered with anxiety. I had received the news with contemptuous unbelief. Sharks, if they came, would not stay in our comparatively chilly waters ;



one might keep one's eyes open, especially while swimming out at some distance from the shore, but the danger was infinitesimal.

Then suddenly, as I swam peacefully shorewards, I became aware of something which for a moment caused my heart to feel cold within me. A great fish seemed to swim beneath but slightly in front of me, keeping pace with my strokes. Great Heavens! could it be a shark?

In an instant all the tricks I had heard of by means of which a shark can be deceived and escaped from passed rapidly through my mind. I must dive quickly and stir up sand between me and him, then swim madly for a few strokes while I am hidden from him, repeating the process until the shore is reached, or until he successfully and finally prevents my little game by rushing in and winning.

Even as at the thought I begin to prepare for diving, the idea occurs to me that this is a curiously made shark—followed by a corollary to the effect that a shark would not accompany me thus, swimming quietly beneath me, but would turn belly upwards and make a dash. . . . I look more closely at him.

Then the truth dawns upon me, and with a sense of relief I realise that I have been idiotic enough to mistake my own shadow, thrown by the sun behind me upon the sand ten feet or more beneath, for a carnivorous brute lying in wait for my blood.

It was foolish, no doubt, to be scared even for an instant; but who expects to see his own shadow at the bottom of the deep sea, unless he has observed the phenomenon before?

I often have a porpoise for a near neighbour while swimming. A friend once declared, in my hearing, that he had swum one summer morning while bathing right into the midst of a school of porpoises, and that these had behaved in the most friendly and flattering manner imaginable. Each one in turn, he said, had come close to him, had affectionately rubbed its sleek, oily brown side against my friend's body, and then made way for the next to perform the like neighbourly and kindly salutation.

In spite of the fact that my informant was undoubtedly of a figure which any porpoise might recognise as possessing points of sympathetic similarity to his own, I did not find the tale quite convincing; I therefore pass it on without any personal guarantee.

The moment arrives when the desire to get into the water becomes irresistible, and in two minutes I am presumptuously ruffling the surface of the wonderful silent sea; it seems almost a



sacrilege to do so, yet I feel that the water never resents taking to its cool embrace one who loves it as faithfully as I do.

It would be worth the trouble of learning to swim under water—supposing that I speak to anyone who is unpractised in the art—if only for the delight of paying a visit of inspection to the bottom of the sea; not indeed where the floor is of sand—for there it is not very unlike the beach at low tide—but where there are rocks with seaweed growing upon them. No one who has not been down to see them would believe how inconceivably beautiful are the sea gardens, especially when the sun is shining brightly enough overhead to pierce the few feet of intervening water, and to allow all the shades and tints of the weeds and anemones, and of the rocks themselves, to reveal their glories to the best and gayest effect.

How different are these same rocks and this very seaweed when the receding tide has left them dry and desolate and commonplace, slimy to the touch and slippery to walk upon! See them now, under water, with the sun on them, the weed standing up in its beauty—a hundred varied growths of it, and waving deliciously in the soft breathing of the ocean. Take a good look at it and at the countless bright little fish that hang quite still in the water a few feet away, watching you, and wondering whether they must dart away in a moment to escape an open-mouthed rush from you.

Take a good look around while your breath lasts. Seize that bit of something that shines like a gem over there, and bring it up with you. It is a particle of resplendent mother-of-pearl; keep it in memory of your first visit to Neptune's garden. He can well spare you the trinket, for his pleasure-grounds are full of such things.

Now I am out and dressed again, and quite disposed to eat a sandwich which I have brought in case I should feel disinclined to return landwards for luncheon. Return, indeed! What! leave this place while the sun is still high in heaven and the water ablaze, and the sandpipers still within call, and while the chance remains of seeing and greeting a thousand other friends? I shall not dream of returning.

The lark has grown drowsy; he has exchanged sky and poesy for earth and the prosaic worm, or maybe for song-earned slumber. My friend the dog, too, has ceased his monotonous complaint against the dulness of the daily round; someone has fed or otherwise comforted and consoled him, I suppose. The few gulls still to be seen floating here and there on the motionless cradle of the

water have been lulled by the prevailing silence to sleep. I, too, shall remain and perhaps sleep a little. Even sleep is not more peaceful or more restful than waking in this place and at this hour. This is the *pianissimo* verse of the Te Deum of the sea-shore; anon, when the winds come out of their hiding-places and cause this still sea to roar aloud and lash its shores in the fierce delight of reawakened strength, the *fortissimo* of the great Psalm will be heard. But, whether in this stillness or in that clamour, or in the middle tones of the gentle breezes and softly lapping waves, the Te Deum is always going on, and a thousand thousand voices take part in it.

Drowsily I watch the hushed life of air, shore, and sea, as for an hour it hangs, as it were, suspended. Even the sandpipers have forgotten for a while that idleness is the unpardonable sin of their tribe; they are silent, hidden somewhere invisible among the stones which are their fellows in hue.

But presently, like a *crescendo* passage in music, things begin almost insensibly to hum into louder life once more. Gulls appear, flying and wheeling, occasionally uttering that complaining, querulous cry of theirs. The merry sandpipers return also, flitting past me in a body, and leaving behind them my own little plump one, who seems to have found some attraction in this particular spot. He scarcely glances at me, but commences his busy, nimble occupation, piping a little from time to time to reassure his friends of his safety or to inform them of his whereabouts—in a word, to keep in touch with his kind.

I have the curiosity to peer into the pool in which my crab—exiled for base and heartless deception—has been deposited. Neither he nor the fish provided for his delectation is to be seen. The fish cannot have moved—*ergo* the crab has eaten it. But where is the crab? Probably he has covered himself with sand and is dreaming of benevolence, of merciful actions misinterpreted by an unappreciative world.

Then two human children come down, each with a small net and a pail and a pair of delicious sun-burned legs. There is also a nurse, but providentially it is borne in upon her to remain far away in the background unseen and unheard. Scolding or warning cries from this person would be a jarring note in the Te Deum, but the chatter and laughter of the children is a sweet excursion into treble tones which is charming and soothing and entirely convincing.

One of the little ones has caught a 'grandfather prawn,' and

must needs race with her slender brown legs to show it to the Person, who gives a grudging word of admiration, and quickly becomes re-absorbed in her book.

And so the afternoon passes, charmed all too quickly away. The children paddle in the bright water, sending many showers of spray into the air as they splash across the pools to show with pride the spoils of the chase. The sandpipers are never far away, though the children have now driven my particular friend back to his companions. The cormorant returns to the scene of his noontide exploit. Can he really require more food after that appalling meal? The sun shines and sinks, but shines still as it sinks gradually seaward; the evening breeze awakes and moves, but only so gently that the sea scarcely dimples in a smile of greeting. But the tide rises steadily, and my foot is nearly caught. It is time to go. Good-night, still sea and golden sunshine, yellow sands and little half-submerged rocklets—babes of the sea whom the waves have put to bed; good-night, genial, fat, busy, little sandpipers. Farewell, pools and all that in you is. See, the tide is going to take you in hand and promote you to be a part of the great ocean that washes unbroken from Pole to Pole! I shall lose you for the night, but I know that I shall find you again in the morning.

That's the best of the sea—once a friend, always a friend; and be your mood what it will, old sea has always a word of sympathy.

FRED WHISHAW.

## *The Recluse.*

WINDS of the World, to-night I hear  
 Your bugles blowing shrill and clear;  
 Calling, still calling. 'Tis in vain,  
 I ride not at your call again.  
 Ay me, and would you stir me yet  
 To the old hope, the old regret,  
 The passions and the pains of youth?  
 Once like the knights of old I went  
 Riding to tilt and tournament  
 With shield of Faith and sword of Truth,  
 Joy sang before me, I was blind  
 To the grim care that rode behind.

But now within my cloistered heart  
 Far from the world I dwell apart,  
 Hearing but what I choose to hear.  
 Shut out alike are Love and Fear,  
 The two great brother-gods who go  
 About the dim world, working woe.  
 Here the sweet air is all unstirred  
 Even by the far-felt, distant beat  
 Of their strong wings, of their white feet.  
 Their strange, mad music dies unheard  
 Ere ever it can pass the bound  
 That fences this my temple round.

Here would I dwell alone, as far  
 From the fierce world as is the star  
 That burns upon the brow of Eve;  
 No more to joy, no more to grieve  
 For aught that moves the lives of men.  
 Ah, heart of mine, what thrills thee then

*THE RECLUSE*

In that faint call that rings afar ?  
Music and laughter rise and fall,  
And evermore the bugles call  
To Life, and Love, and glorious War.  
Hark to the thunder of the drum,  
Winds of the World. I come, I come !

D. J. ROBERTSON.

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

LONG ago did A. K. H. B. catch my boyish attention by an article written with the forehead of his horse for his desk. These were difficult circumstances, but more cheerful than my own, scribbling in bed under disastrous African news (*which hardly matters*), and also under 'influenza.' I do not believe that it *is* influenza; people call everything by that name which they cannot call gout. At all events, if influenza it be, one has often had that malady before it was fashionable, and before it got its present name. Really, science gains little by giving a trifling cold a long name. Meanwhile, the British bourgeois displays all his notorious caution, declines to enter a house where influenza is fabled to exist, and places the unafflicted occupants in quarantine. There is, probably, such a thing as influenza proper, but it ought not to be allowed to act as a terror where it does not exist. For a cold is a cold: my acquaintance with the malady is as old as 'that long disease my life,' and every cold is not influenza. No doubt every sort of *bobo* was called the plague at Athens, Florence, and London during the prevalence of the real malady, and it would not be strange if many people then died from mere fright.

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How our ancestors managed to live at all is a mystery. One needs only to look at the novels of the last century to feel the difficulty of the problem. In all circumstances, or even, so to speak, in no circumstances in particular, people were freely bled. They cannot have been anæmic, our ancestors. Our generations would not survive the perpetual bleedings and drenchings. One day Lord Waldegrave met Horace Walpole, and remarked that he had a headache. 'Go home and take James's Powders,' said Horace. Lord Waldegrave went home and took 'James'—and took small-pox. Then Horace was naturally in a tremor: was 'James' good for small-pox? This does not seem to be certain, but when poor Lord Waldegrave was actually dying, his

doctors put on 'James' again, as slows are occasionally tried in the agony of a cricket match. It is clear that 'James' only added needlessly to the final sufferings of poor Lord Waldegrave. Such was medicine a hundred years ago: the main thing for the doctor was to 'let the patient know he was there' by bleeding him to a skeleton, or dosing him into agonies, worse than death, and often death's precursors. As far as an outsider like myself understands, the fault was not so much the fault of the physician as of the patients. They wanted to be sure that something was being done, and were more or less content if only they suffered martyrdom in all its forms. 'We may die,' they argued, 'but at all events we have been bled like men' (or like pigs), 'and have swallowed every kind of abominable mixture.' Such was the generation that took Quebec and the Havannah; all their ideas were heroic. But they could have done as well on land and sea if, like ourselves, they had thrown physic to the dogs, and refused to convert the human interior into the store of a chemist and druggist. They have bequeathed to us the names of great pill and powder men, James, Dover (or is he a place?), Dr. Abernethy, Dr. Gregory—of the Mixture. Dr. Gregory was of the proscribed Clan Gregor; I vaguely fancy that there were thirteen professors in his family, all akin to Rob Roy. Dr. Abernethy was quite an entertaining writer on psychological subjects. We still take their pills and powders in Scotland with a melancholy enjoyment derived from literary and historical associations. But death rather than James's Powders! The reason will be obvious to a minute student of the affecting case of Lord Waldegrave. In spite of the vigorous and rigorous methods of the great professional doctors, many amateurs appear, like Horace Walpole, to have physicked themselves and the most confiding of their friends. This practice, one hopes, is now confined to village society, where the 'wise woman' is consulted, but there is nothing to prevent any lady from being her own wise woman. The art or science of medicine no doubt consists in leaving patients judiciously alone, after telling them not to catch cold. Nature will then subconsciously fight it out with her own bacilli and all the rest of these new-fangled cattle. The conscience of the patient will (or will not) prevent him from smoking before it is righteous for him to smoke. But a patient is not likely to feel a desire to smoke unless his condition is improving. Nature can take care of herself in that respect, and in most others.



A writer on Customs in the *Cornhill Magazine* for February mentions an old French lady who, fifty years ago, said that women 'had come down from their pedestal since they let men smoke in their presence.' I doubt if Frenchwomen ever really occupied any pedestal at all; if they did, it was a pedestal of gilt *papier mâché*. But smoking has had vicissitudes. Before Beau Nash's day, say 1750, men smoked in the Assembly Rooms at Bath. Nash put down this practice (which I do not defend), and about 1772 we find Johnson declaring, as an unquestionable fact, that smoking had gone out of vogue. No doubt there have been other revolutions in the annals of tobacco; now fashionable the weed has been, now 'low,' but its amiable flame has never been extinguished. By the way, when smoking was 'out,' in Dr. Johnson's day, snuff was 'in,' so that there was no real improvement in manners.

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One is sorry that Cardinal Vaughan and Dr. Mivart have had all this trouble about Jonah and Habakkuk. Vainly does a non-expert hope to understand these things; they always turn out to be something quite different from the plain English of them. When the Master of Balliol was asked if he would sign the Thirty-nine Articles, he replied, 'Yes, if someone will kindly lend me a pen.' But Dr. Mivart would not sign some profession of faith tendered to him by Cardinal Vaughan, and so he has been excommunicated. That I take to be the plain English of it, but doubtless I am entirely mistaken. Excommunication no longer means that the learned naturalist is to be boycotted by all sorts and conditions of men; that was the real pinch of excommunication in ancient days. Dr. Mivart really cannot believe that an angel picked up Habakkuk by the hair, as he was addressing himself to his soup, and carried him to share his soup (or it may have been broth) with Daniel in Babylon. It is a pity that Dr. Mivart cannot accept this anecdote, but then probably Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace *can*. It is not a bit odder than the sudden appearance of Mrs. Guppy, not in full dress, in the middle of a room at a distance from her home. To be sure, the distance—say, from Bayswater to Hampstead—was not so great as in Habakkuk's case; but once you admit a hundred yards, and a thousand miles is just as easy to accept. Then there was the lady, a couple of years ago, who appeared in Mr. Stead's own tabernacle at Wimbledon, while a 'halibi' was put in, to the effect that she was simultaneously in Bayswater. Mr. Wallace, to the best of my memory and belief,

held the theory that spirits carried this lady to Mr. Stead's tabernacle; and if ordinary spirits can do this, why should not an angel carry Habakkuk? Fairies often do this kind of thing; and there are half a dozen cases in the record of *The Miracles of Madame St. Katherine of Fierbois*. One must decide that scientific eminence does not diminish man's powers of belief. Mr. Wallace is among the most distinguished men of science, and he can (or could) believe in the story of Mr. Stead's 'lady friend,' even though not vouched for by a canonical writer—not *her* fault, of course, but merely because no canonical writers are left alive. Then Dr. Mivart, equally scientific, is more sceptical. My hope is that the Church will not conceive any prejudice against science merely because of Dr. Mivart, for Mr. Wallace can make up for Dr. Mivart's unlucky deficiencies as a believer. But could not Dr. Mivart himself 'take a thought,' and reconsider the whole subject of Habakkuk? He may say that *Bel and the Dragon* (in which the phenomena are described) is not a work of great authority, and that the evidence is remote. But the evidence for Mrs. Guppy and Mr. Stead's 'lady friend' is fresh, and rests, no doubt, on the affidavits of honourable men. Then there exists such a large chapter of similar instances, which Dr. Mivart will easily find when he begins to examine the topic carefully, that I do not despair of seeing him convinced, and reconciled to the Cardinal. The cases of the Habakkuk phenomena among the Australian blacks and the Scottish Celts are most persuasive. After all, Habakkuk was only what science calls an *apport*; the thing is so common that it has a recognised name. Yes, I feel sure that Dr. Mivart has been a little hasty, or has spoken without making a thorough comparative study of cases like Habakkuk's and Mrs. Guppy's. A calmer, wider survey of things in general often brings theological peace where there has been 'fruitful hot water for all parties.' After all, I am not certain that I do not err very gravely indeed; for the Pope says that 'miracles are *not* the startling effect of natural law,' and my argument is that, given angels and other powerful beings, they are as much in nature as a brickbat is, and that, if they carry Habakkuk or Mrs. Guppy up and down, it is startling, no doubt, but perfectly natural. I should much like to discuss this view of the case with the learned and amiable Pontiff; for if an angel is *not* in nature, in the name of metaphysics, what *is* he in? An unbelieving person may cavil at the evidence for the existence of the spirits that convey Mrs. Guppy about. But, granting their existence, surely they are

*in rerum natura*; or, if not, where are they? I think St. Augustine hath a passage in which he leans rather to my side of this question.

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I don't know in the least why Oliver Cromwell is having such a boom at present. As if Dr. Gardiner and Mr. Carlyle were not enough (they and the Dissenting minister who boldly declares that there were no gentlemen in arms against the sacred person of his Majesty), here is Mr. Morley writing a *Life of Noll* in one American magazine, and Mr. Roosevelt writing a *Life of Noll* in another. The result is that I have to-day seen an American magazine without an essay on George Washington! George was crowded out. Now these two gentlemen, the Protector and the great Virginian sportsman, are in my own private gallery of heroes. Cromwell had so much humour; he would have liked to be so tolerant; he turned out the General Assembly—a thing that had long needed to be done. And yet one has rather too many *Lives of Cromwell*, because everyone has his own Cromwell (probably mine is quite unlike Mr. Morley's brewer), and so everybody writes a *Life*. I never feel sure that Cromwell would have got on pleasantly with Mr. Morley, and I fear that on Mr. Morley Cromwell would occasionally have grated. There would have been friction, followed by an explosion. Madame de Boufflers, among others, wrote on Cromwell. She said that Oliver took holy orders (a kind of Puritan Aramis), and then went to Holland to fight the Dutch. I have not observed these circumstances in any of the recent *Lives of the hero*. They appear to me as dubious as the discovery of Oliver's Nonconformist biographer that all the gentry of England were of the Royalist party. Had that been the case, Oliver would have been a Royalist. Another delicious piece of false history occurs in the letters of a cleverer person than either Madame de Boufflers or the Nonconformist biographer of the Protector. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was in Rome about six years after the death of the Princess Clementina Sobieska, the wife of the Chevalier de St. George, and the mother of Prince Charles. Here she discovered and sent the story to London that poor Clementina had been the mistress of the Pope, to the scandal of even the Roman populace; that the Chevalier remonstrated and left Rome; that Clementina retired into a convent, and there committed suicide! Yet Lady Mary was certainly one of the dozen cleverest women who ever lived and wrote historical anecdotes.

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Some bookmaker might make a book—and a very dull book it would be—on the correspondents of the best letter-writers. The daughter to whom Madame de Sévigné wrote was not the brightest of her sex. Mann's letters to Walpole are as dull as may be. We wonder if Horace really read them. Lady Pomfret, to whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu unbosomed herself, is said to have been a very tedious woman. Undeniably dreary is Mason, the correspondent of Gray. Cicero's correspondents were far from being on his own level; but surely those of Mr. Matthew Arnold and George Eliot must have written more interesting letters than these which surprise us when they come from two such illustrious authors. It is said to take two to make a quarrel, but a correspondence can get on admirably with only one clever writer. But it does seem odd that the clever writers hardly ever select clever correspondents. A valuable part of a great man's correspondence would be a separate volume of his replies to bores. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Ruskin must have written thousands of replies to bores; Mr. Ruskin used to be vivacious in these effusions. But all the creatures wanted was his autograph: it did not matter what he said, as long as he wrote with his own hand.



'Blood is thicker than water,' and, as many of the citizens of America are of 'pure Knickerbocker blood,' they naturally side with the Boers. This 'union of hearts' I do not pretend to criticise. Hearts are irrepressible organs, and the political Venus joins them as she pleases. But though at a great American pro-Boer meeting one of the speakers (Mr. Phelan was it, or was it Father Whelan?) announced that the Stars and Stripes would soon float over London, still American autograph-hunters ought not to be premature. Let me assure these citizens that, till the Star-spangled Banner *does* float over London, the British Post Office only accepts stamps with the image and superscription of Queen Victoria. It is therefore mere waste of money for the citizens to send American stamps over here, in company with requests for 'the last poor treasure of a ruined land'—the autographs of our literary gents. *After* the American conquest of England, indeed, American stamps will be current here; but up to the date of writing they are not. This is evident, of course, to the majority of intelligent citizens, but the autograph-collector is only one remove from the congenital idiot. Till the law recognises that

the remove is a short one, and that the autograph-hunter ought to be locked up, we must keep explaining the nature of his errors about stamps. The last citizen who presented me with a stamp bearing the head of some notability of the last century asked me to write out a few favourite Biblical texts, accompanied with some devotional or critical outpourings of my own. I dare say he also favoured President Kruger, and sent *him* American stamps for reply. It is amusing to reflect that Turkish, Russian, Chinese, Greek, and Portuguese celebrities must all be in receipt of American stamps from American autograph-collectors. They might as well send presidents' heads to Homer in Hades, where, no doubt, the stamps bear the head of Queen Proserpina, for even the democratic Athenians did not hold that Hades was a republic. It is a pity that Lucian did not write a study of the revolution in Hades, the fall of Pluto and his consort, and the establishment of a pure democracy, with Thersites for first president. The idea would have been worth money to a Tory wit in Athens like Aristophanes. Alas! the idea comes too late. The sympathetic thing in the Athenian character is that they would have taken the joke: they delighted in their Tory humorist as he ridiculed all their favourite ideas. So unnatural yet joyous a democracy was not fated to live a long life or a strong life. As a private quality, humour has its merits, but it is inconsistent with success. Indeed, Cromwell was here, as everywhere, an exception to a general rule, and only survived by aid of the massive and ponderous want of humour in his party. Knox's humour was of a different sort, and merely consisted in a habit of uttering a grating laugh over the swollen legs of a queen, or the abscess in the ear of a king, not of his own religion. Where Knox himself was concerned, he was absolutely devoid of humour, and a thoroughly successful character.

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A good story seldom comes so well out of a critical examination as does the story of Wolfe's recital of Gray's *Elegy* from the hands of Dr. Morris, in the *English Historical Review*. A Mr. Robison was in Wolfe's boat when Wolfe visited some of his posts on the night before the battle in which he fell. Wolfe then recited 'nearly the whole' of the *Elegy*, and said that he would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow.' That was Mr. Robison's story, as reported by Mr. Playfair. Is that not good enough? Historians, Carlyle,

Lord Stanhope, and others have placed the occasion a few hours later; and Carlyle says, 'Wolfe silently descends . . . conversing with his people,' an odd blunder for Carlyle. The story remains as good as ever, and as creditable to Wolfe's generous admiration of poetry. Gray, on the other hand, as Professor Morris quotes his letters, writes in a *pocourante* style about our 'victories,' and laughs at Pitt for shedding tears in the course of a speech on the honours due to Wolfe. This conduct of Gray's was probably part of the literary affectation of the age. One may suppose that if a feeling and generous heart is needed for poetry-making, Wolfe could have beaten Gray at his own game. Professor Morris falls foul of Mr. A. G. Bradley, who, 'evidently not regarding accuracy as important,' calls 'Robison' 'Robertson.' Well, I am not sure that 'Robison' would have thought this very inaccurate, for in Scottish letters of the date I find 'Robison' written for 'Robertson' in the case of the Robertsons of Struan, the head of the clan. The writer is the Laird of Glengarry, and his brother had married one of these Robertsons, whom he calls 'Robisons.' Mr. Bradley may console himself by reflecting that he shares the terrible error with the connection and neighbour of the contemporary Robisons or Robertsons.

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A disagreeable story of Wolfe occurs in a letter written by a lady at Aberdeen in 1746. Cumberland lodged at her house. She reports that Wolfe came from Cumberland 'to let me know that I was deprived of everything I had but the clothes on my back.' He informed her that her tea was confiscated, and that being 'very fond of china themselves,' Hawley and Cumberland meant to loot her china closet, which they did. In fact, the lady draws up a long inventory of her losses, and mentions people who had seen her property at London, in Hawley's possession, while the china was packed up and directed to Cumberland's house in London. In London a Mr. Jackson (who knew the poor plunder in its owner's Aberdeen home) found it in a china shop. Cumberland had given it to a woman of the town, and the woman had sold it.

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It is not pleasant to find the great Wolfe serving two such masters as Cumberland and Hawley in such barefaced robbery. I had never seen any contradiction of the story till recently, when I found, in a MS. diary of 1746, the statement that a lady had



seen the missing articles, china, glass, and other things, in their owner's house, months after she described the looting of them. One lady or the other must have been a most impudent liar. We have the owner's, Mrs. Gordon's, signed lament and inventory; of the other lady's narrative we have only the casual mention by the keeper of the diary, a Whig. For what it is worth I give the denial in the interests of Wolfe. His superior officers have few apologists, though the Duke of Cumberland was in higher matters an uncommonly honourable man, and I would fain hope that he did not steal the tea and the tea things. A man who held the candle for the surgeon when his own leg was being hacked, and who stopped the process that the operator might put on a clean jacket, must have had even more than the courage which his worst enemies were fain to acknowledge in his House. So much pluck half excuses his brutality, for he would not understand that his victims had less endurance than himself. Nor are we ever likely to know whether people who bear pain so well suffer less than people who bear it ill, or whether they are braver, not less sensible. There is no odynometer that I ever heard of, and we cannot tell whether when your arm and mine are cut off our sufferings are equal in quantity and quality. But women are notably brave in the endurance of pain, and, as their constitutions are more sensitive than ours, I suppose courage carries them through, not insensibility. But the stoicism of some savages, not otherwise conspicuously brave, is perhaps an argument on the opposite side. In 1870 I was on board a Rhine boat with several wounded German officers. They smoked large cigars and ate peaches, but one poor fellow moaned in a heart-breaking way. He was an English lad who had injured himself internally—I think by a fall in the Alps. One could not but believe that he was really suffering more than the convalescent officers. How great must be the pain that drove Scott, yelling, from his own dinner table, and prevented him from even feeling hot applications that scorched his shirt. Yet in these agonies, and interrupted by his own cries, he dictated *The Bride of Lammermoor*. So much self-control was unable to restrain his expressions of anguish, which, therefore, must have ranged high on the pain-measurer, or odynometer.

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Mr. Mason and I owe our apologies to the readers of this magazine for making Mr. Wogau 'rub his hands,' while we, and



history, had correctly stated that hands he had none to rub, having lost his arm at Fontenoy. Now when Agamemnon, in Homer, carves a lamb, after being wounded in the arm, German critics detect a multiplex authorship. But Agamemnon had been wounded a fairly long way back in the narrative, and I think the poet forgot, or did not care. We have no such excuse, and, as a matter of fact, it was the collaborator, who did *not* write the chapter, that foisted in Mr. Wogan's two hands, regardless of the statement of the other collaborator, who again overlooked the interpolation.

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Mr. Walter Pollock writes to me, 'confessing, and not avoiding, a blunder in his little book, concerning "the incomparable Jane."'

He interpreted certain 'gibberish' to mean 'strike the harp in praise of *Stradella*.'

The fact which has since been pointed out to Mr. Pollock is, that the passage refers to a glee popular in the early part of the last century, 'Strike the harp in praise of *Bragela*,' an Ossianic hero. Mr. Pollock had never heard of this person, or, in spite of his having been for many years a musical critic, of the glee.

ANDREW LANG.

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